

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, December 11, 2014

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Council hits streets to tackle big freeze



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TEDDY JOY

Little Daisy reunited with beloved toy



PAGE 5

Heathens fans unite in bid to find home

SUPPORTERS of Cradley Heathens Speedway Club are establishing a new trust aimed at boosting plans to find a permanent home for the team.

The Heathens were told they could no longer use Wolverhampton's Monmore Green track for 2015, their temporary home for the last four years. But a deal was struck for the club to move across the West Midlands to hold race meetings at Birmingham's Perry Barr stadium next season, while bosses continue to campaign to build their own stadium.

Fans were this week holding a meeting to help establish their own supporters' trust. Organiser, Gary Willets, who helped set up a similar trust at Halesowen Town Football Club, says the trust wanted to help the Heathens find a home. The club has shared tracks since losing its Dudley Wood stadium.

He said: "With plans in place to keep the Cradley team racing on track in 2015, using Perry Barr as a home venue, the renowned Heathens fans have been galvanised into trying to secure the long term future of the club. Cradley Heath supporters groups have agreed to merge into one organisation in order to strengthen all future backing."

Premier Inn hotel opens

A £9.5 million hotel and restaurant development in Stourbridge will open on Monday.

More than 70 jobs have been created at the 80-bed Premier Inn and Brewers Fayre pub restaurant in Birmingham. Work began in April this year.

A spokesman said: "There's been a huge number of bookings made before the hotel's doors have even opened. The positive response to the hotel shows the need for hotel rooms in Stourbridge."

HOSPITAL NEEDS HELP, SAYS MP

New venue for concert after hall is closed

DUDLEY Town Hall has been closed for health and safety reasons due to an internal structural problem — meaning a major Christmas concert has had to be moved at the last minute.

The Gentlemen Singers' Christmas concert on Saturday is being relocated at Brierley Hill Civic Hall. Tickets already bought for the 7.30pm concert will be valid at the new venue but seating will be unreserved. The concert, for the Mayor's Charities, features a Wall Heath children's choir.

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environment and culture, said: "We will be making repairs to some loose plaster on the ceiling of Dudley Town Hall, after cracks appeared. Given the age and design of the town hall we are looking to get specialist contractors in to do the work which means, regrettably, the hall will be closed over Christmas."

"We have five forthcoming events booked in over the next few weeks and are working with organisers to offer alternative venues such as Brierley Hill Civic Hall and Stourbridge Town Hall to try to avoid cancelling any shows. We would like to apologise to everyone using our town hall for any inconvenience during this essential but unforeseen repair work."

Homes sites work starting

TWO multi-million pound housing projects that will regenerate pockets of land in Dudley will get under way this month.

New homes will be built on the site of a former council depot on The Walk in Sedgley and on disused land in Norfolk Road, Wollaston.

Dudley Council is investing £2 million to develop both schemes and £385,000 has come from the Homes and Communities Agency. Both are expected to be completed next summer.

Festive fairytale fun at Haden Hill House



Museum staff Alison Hyatt and Anne Willetts prepare for a traditional Christmas at the museum in Cradley Heath

PLENTY of Christmas cheer will be on offer to visitors at Cradley Heath's Haden Hill House this Sunday.

Visitors can enjoy a day with a Cinderella theme at the attraction in Halesowen Road from 11am until 3pm when the museum will be transformed into a winter wonderland.

Children can see Cinderella's carriage and meet characters from the fairytale. The prince will also be trying to find the owner of the glass slipper.

There will be snow to play in out in the park and lots of magic and balloons in the house.

There will also be a festive sing-

along and a chance for youngsters to play instruments and take part in crafts activities and trails. Santa will also be popping in to hear children's Christmas wishes.

Museum services manager Jane Hanney said: "We are hoping for a really magical Christmas at the museum and it is wonderful to see the wonder on children's and adult's faces."

Traditional

"It is a lovely way to get into the Christmas spirit with traditional decorations and lots of sparkle."

Haden Old Hall was originally built

in the late 1600s and evidence suggests it was originally two farm dwellings. By the time the Haden-Bests inherited it in the 1870s it was time for a more modern house to be built.

It is believed that Mr Haden-Best intended to eventually demolish the old hall but both buildings survive, although Haden Old Hall is only part restored after a major fire. The Victorian house is a museum furnished with Victorian objects.

For more information on the award-winning attraction call (01384) 569 444, or visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/museums



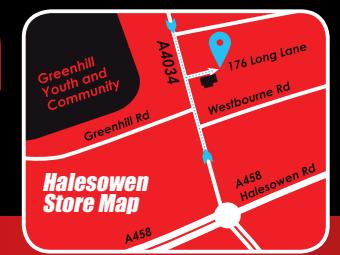
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Parking fines have 'desired effect'

HUNDREDS of fines have been handed out to drivers who parked badly at railway stations in Sandwell and Dudley.

During eight weeks, 205 fines of £100 were dished out at Sandwell and Dudley, 199 at Rowley Regis and 135 at Stourbridge Junction. The fines are reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days.

Centro decided to take action

after complaints about cars obstructing other motorists and forcing pedestrians to walk in the road at stations. Bosses say the scheme is proving successful as the number of fines given out is falling each week.

Councillor Roger Horton, lead member for rail and Midland Metro for Centro, said: "Although tickets are still being issued, and despite a small rise in weeks six and seven of

the scheme, the overall steady reduction in numbers shows the message is getting through.

"We are glad the campaign is having the desired effect and making people think about parking more considerably."

Stephen Rhodes, Centro director of operations, said Stourbridge, Rowley Regis and Sandwell and Dudley have the highest numbers

because they are some of the busiest stations on the network.

He said demand for parking was being addressed by car park expansion work. Work is underway to add 360 spaces to the existing 382 at Rowley Regis, while 223 were being added to the 789 at Stourbridge Junction. A re-design is also due at Sandwell and Dudley station next year to add to the 374 spaces.

'Lawlessness' of the car cruisers under fire

THE JUDGE who granted the Black Country injunction against boy racers said there appeared to be 'complete lawlessness' in the four boroughs over the issue.

Birmingham Civil Justice Centre heard this week how the injunction was sought because the police didn't have 'sufficient resources' to prosecute, making it difficult to bring car cruisers 'to book'.

NHS patients give Trust good report

A HEALTH trust which cares for patients which a mental health condition has been ranked highly.

Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust scored among the top 20 per cent trusts in the country for patients experience.

Patients rating their experience as 'good or very good' in the Care Quality Commission Community Mental Health Survey. In the same survey, 75 per cent of those who responded reported that they felt that they were treated with dignity and respect.

Nine out of ten reported that they felt their health or social care worker listened to them carefully.

Results from the National Mental Health Inpatient Survey were also positive, according to trust bosses.

The trust scored significantly higher than the national average for patients feeling welcome on the ward, hospital cleanliness and being listened to by psychiatrists and nurses.

Significant improvements from last year's survey were made in access to out-of-hours phone contact, availability of activities and quality of hospital food.

A three-year order banning the practice was granted in an effort to eradicate it from the streets.

The Black Country now joins Cannock District Council which sought a similar injunction in 2012.

Mr Joseph Giret QC, representing Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell councils, said: "Police don't have the sufficient wherewithal to bring everyone involved in car cruising to book."

Accidents

It emerged in the hearing that there had been 31 accidents in the Black Country as a result of car cruising and that as recent as November 16 there had been problems.

The Black Country Route in Bilton and Moxley; Birmingham New Road on the border of Wolverhampton and Dudley; Flood Street Car Park in Dudley have been hotspots.

More than 100 witness statements from residents across the area were submitted as part of the application.

Many spoke of their concern about the anti-social impact on their lives with dangerous driving, littering and loud music.

His Honour Judge Robert Owen QC said: "It appears to be complete lawlessness in these four boroughs where people can't be prosecuted. Something doesn't seem right."

'Don't block the gritters' plea



Transport boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed urges people to think before they park

DRIVERS are being asked to think about where they park in Dudley as the icy weather takes hold.

Dudley Council say that in freezing weather gritting crews are being forced away from smaller streets and side roads because of bad parking. Now, highway boss Councillor Khurshid Ahmed is urging people to think before they park to ensure gritters have full access to streets, keeping them clear as the days get colder.

The cabinet member for transport said:

"The gritting crews work all hours of the day and night in order to keep the majority of Dudley borough roads as far as possible for people to use."

"There have been a number of roads where gritting vehicles have not been able to enter as badly parked vehicles blocked access. This has created difficulties in manoeuvring a heavy lorry carrying several tonnes of grit."

"I hope that residents will work with us and will be considerate."

Police boss vigilance call over threats

A CHIEF has vowed 'we won't give in to terrorists' in the wake of threats to kidnap and kill a serving West Midlands Police officer.

Counter terrorism officers arrested a man following the threats, which led the force to step up security for their own policemen and women.

The 31-year-old was detained at a property in an undisclosed area of the region on Tuesday night.

Officers are refusing to say what the man has been arrested on suspicion of, or where he was being held.

Assistant Chief Constable Garry Forsyth said police officers would continue to do their 'dangerous and difficult' job and urged the public to remain vigilant after the threat.

He said: "The threat level nationally is severe, which means an attack is highly likely. We don't want the public to be alarmed."

"We continue to do our job day in day out and we have an awful lot of police officers who deeply care about the communities they serve and who regularly will put themselves in danger to keep the public safe."

He added: "We do want the public to remain vigilant but we do not want them to be concerned."

218 homes for haulage site

MORE than 200 homes will be built on the site of a haulage firm's former base in Rowley Regis after planning permission was granted.

Sandwell Council has approved the scheme for the Doulton Road site which had been a location for French logistics firm Norbert Dentressangle. A total of 218 homes — houses and apartments — and a retail development will be built.

It comes after bosses announced last year that they would be relocating the business to the East Midlands with the loss of 140 jobs.

Crafty for charity

A CHRISTMAS craft and table top fair is being held to raise money for the West Midlands Air Ambulance.

The fair will be held at St John's Church, Dudley Wood, on Saturday from 11am to 2pm.

Entry costs 20p on the door.

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Hospital boss still 'positive' on review

THE chief executive at Russells Hall Hospital say she remains positive despite a review by a health watchdog demanding improvements.

The Care Quality Commission looked at the hospital and met patient, carers and workers as part of its inspection carried out in March this year.

While it rated three categories of the hospital to be 'good', inspectors said two areas — safety and responsiveness — required improvement. The hospital trust was told to improve and was given a list of demands including reviewing patient flow and ensuring satisfactory staffing levels.

Chief executive Paula Clark said she was pleased with the inspectors' confidence that improvements were 'within the grasp' of the trust. She also praised the hard work of staff, who were endorsed by patients for 'going the extra mile'.

She said: "It is disappointing we haven't quite tipped over the line into good. I think we were on the cusp of being rated as good and if we had tipped over it would have been fantastic for the staff and a real boost for them. But we haven't quite made it this time. We recognise we can always do better."

Conversion on cue at church

PLANS to turn a former snooker hall into a church have been given the go-ahead.

The Birmingham Pentecostal Fellowship will move in to The Golden Cue, in Station Road, Rowley Regis, sometime over the next six months.

The organisation, which has almost 100 members, currently hires a church hall in Solihull.

The fellowship affiliated to Assemblies of God plans to hold services on Saturdays and Sundays. The church group will plan now to buy the site for £230,000.

Helix demolition

A DISUSED stationary factory will be demolished as its owners search for a buyer for the site. More than 700 were employed at the Helix plant in Engine Lane, Lye, at its height. The factory closed eight years ago. Dudley Council have given approval for demolition.

Birthday celebrations for little Daisy-Mae



Daisy-Mae Little celebrates her first birthday

SHE was the 'girl who couldn't wait'. Daisy-Mae Little came into the world three-and-a-half months early.

Weighing just 1lb and 13 oz, the tiny youngster spent 13 weeks in hospital with her proud parents Wayne and Jennifer, from Dudley, at her side.

Now their brave daughter, who captured the hearts of thousands of people across the globe, has celebrated her first birthday.

And on Saturday night fundraising event was held in her honour to raise money for the hospital where she received specialist neo-natal care.

Since leaving New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton and going home with her family to Pensnett, she has 'come on leaps and bounds', her parents say.

To celebrate her birthday, the family went to the Sealife Centre in Birmingham for the day.

Mr Little said: "I wasn't sure what it was going to be like as a day out because it development terms although it's first birthday she really is only like an eight-and-a-half month baby. But she absolutely loved it because it was so visual.

"She really liked the jelly fish because

they were in bright colourful tubes in the display.

"The day was such a contrast to where we were 12 months ago when we were in the hospital and not thinking about the next day. We were just living minute by minute, hour by hour because we didn't know what was going to happen. She's doing really well now and coming on leaps and bounds every day."

Mr Little, a firefighter for West Midlands Fire Service, has been chronicling his daughter's story on Facebook. Daisy-Mae's page has more than 23,000 followers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MP is in festive mood at new shop

MP Ian Austin enjoyed a mince pie and some mulled wine in Dudley town centre to celebrate the opening of a vintage shop.

Vintage Rose has been set up by Rose Cook and will feature local history as well as selling vintage clothes and furniture.

The Victorian-themed opening took place at the shop in Birdeage Walk off Castle Street. Carol singers were on hand to add to the festive mood.

The Dudley North Labour MP said: "It's always great to see new businesses opening in Dudley town centre."

Petition opposes store next to pub

AROUND 250 people have signed a petition in just the first few days since a meeting opposing plans to build a convenience store on the car park of a popular Cradley Heath pub.

Up to 20 jobs could be created by the business, which would be built beside the Haden Cross in Halesowen Road and run by The Co-Operative. But the scheme has sparked opposition from locals who fear it threatens the future of the pub and say parking provision is not sufficient.

Family flee from blaze in kitchen

A KITCHEN fire forced a family out of their home in Brierley Hill.

The fire started at the property on Foxdale Drive, at around 5.30pm on Sunday.

One crew from Brierley Hill fire station attended.

Crew Commander Tom Edwards said: "The fire was caused by fat from the grill pan which set the cooker alight. The fire was quickly extinguished."

Former doctor's surgery on market

A FORMER doctor's surgery in Dudley has gone up for sale, priced £250,000.

Kates Hill Surgery, in Wolverton Road, served 1,500 patients but closed last year after funding for the practice ran out. It had only opened in 2010.

The building, which has 10 parking spaces, has now been listed for sale by The Lee Shaw Partnership.

New gym to open

A NEW gym will open in High Street, Brierley Hill, at the end of the month as people start considering getting rid of the Christmas pounds. Xercise4Less will open on December 31, creating 40 jobs.

Taxpayers face huge bill for borough's fly-tip rubbish

TENS of thousands of pounds has been spent clearing up after fly-tippers in Dudley borough during the past two years.

Sites in Quarry Bank, Kingswinford, Cradley and Halesowen were among those most targeted by people dumping waste.

Figures released under the Freedom of Information Act show Dudley Council was forced to pay out £49,395 in 2013/14 to clear up rubbish and £35,255 in 2012/13.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed said the council worked hard to track down and prosecute fly-tippers.

The council said the top five hot-spots where the most money was spent were: Mears Coppice, Quarry Bank; Lapal Lane South, Halesowen; Holbeach Lane, Kingswinford; Hellier Street, Dudley; and Foxcote Lane in Cradley.

Councillor Ahmed said: "The cost of staff time clearing up fly-tipping and then disposing of the waste over the last two years was just over £80,000, which we hope illustrates to people what a serious offence this is."

"We have carried out prosecutions where we are able to identify the offenders so we would urge people who witness fly-tipping, or have any information about incidents in the borough, to contact Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345. We will not hesitate to prosecute people through the courts for this kind of anti-social behaviour."

In September, the council took action after rubbish was left strewn across land off Clinic Drive in Lye after residents and Abdul Qadus, chairman of Lye Community Centre, called for the site to be cleared up. But Mr Qadus said more rubbish had since been dumped, including car seats and a mattress.

"We have small grants available in the region of £1,000 and £2,000 for people who come up with ideas and suggestions."

Baggies bring festive cheer to wards



Baggies players seen during their visit to Sandwell General Hospital with patient Daniel Waldron and nurses

WEST Bromwich Albion players brought festive cheer to the children's ward at Sandwell General Hospital.

Five members of the first-team squad personally delivered a variety of presents for the young patients.

They were goalkeeper Luke Daniels, defenders Cristian Gamboa, Sébastien Pocognoli and Jason Davidson, and striker Victor Anichebe.

The players were joined by Father Christmas, who helped bring smiles to the faces of the poorly youngsters.

He said: "The other players told me how they genuinely look forward to this - and I understand why."

As well as the toys given out to the children, the players also presented two PlayStation 4 consoles and a signed shirt to the ward. The shirt will be raffled off to raise cash for the hospital.

It was a first visit to the hospital for Belgian international full back Pogognoli, who joined the club in the summer.

He said: "It is always good to see the smiles you can bring to the children's faces."

Last year, seven of the club's first team players walked through the doors of the ward to hand out gifts.

They were joined by West Bromwich Albion's two mascots, Baggie Bird and Albi, who joined the players in getting photographs with the excited youngsters and their families.

Players also went to Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley and to Birmingham Children's Hospital on Tuesday.

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THE tree fellers took down an old oak at the end of the road and invited us to help ourselves. So for the first time in years we hauled home ye old yule log and placed it by the front door as a sign of welcome. Snag is, people keep tripping over it, so it's not so much a yule log as a yule catch your foot on that log.

I ADMIT our yule log cannot compete with the festive suggestion from BBC Gardener's World magazine — a wreath made of sprouts. I suggest you hang it on your door to greet visitors with the motto: "Look what the wind blew in."

MEANWHILE, from A Christmas Carol, published in 1843, Ebenezer Scrooge offers his thoughts on the Chancellor's 2014 autumn statement: "What's Christmas time for you but a time for paying bills without money?"

A READER reports the following: Cost of replacing broken zip in daughter's school skirt, £14. Cost of two new identical school skirts at local supermarket, £8. Thanks to globalisation, the old motto "make do and mend" has become make do and spend. It no longer makes sense to repair anything.

LORD Harries of Pentregarth, a senior bishop in the Church of England, says Prince Charles's coronation service should have a reading from the Koran. It seems likely that invitations will be sent to Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish leaders. But hell, why stop there? Let's have a coronation that fully reflects the diverse beliefs of this great nation. I want Shakers, Quakers, Scientologists and druids. I want a flypast by elves and fairies, synchronised yoga by leprechauns and military drill by serried ranks of Jedi knights. I want witches and pagans and a special Coronation promise by the tooth fairy, a recitation by Prince Charles' talking shrubs, a sermon for atheists by Richards Dawkins and a reading by Psychic Sally ("I'm getting someone called Victoria, your majesty. She says she's very proud of you"). I suspect Charles' reign will be a batty sort of affair so let's start as he means to go on.

**Don't miss Peter Rhodes
every Monday to Friday in
your Express & Star**

THE English Defence League is planning to return to Dudley in protest at the decision to grant planning permission for a new mosque.

The far-right protest group intends to hold a demonstration in the town on February 7, according to one of its Facebook pages.

By Daniel Wainwright

The UKIP MEP said: "The mosque is a controversial matter and a lot of people have their opinions on it. It is being opposed on planning grounds. Groups like the EDL have nothing constructive to add with the way they behave. I ask them to stay away from Dudley. This is a sensitive issue and it does not need people causing trouble."

Legal

Dudley Muslim Association is locked in a planning battle with Dudley Council over a proposal for a mosque on land off Hall Street.

Earlier this month, the association won planning permission for the mosque. But it faces at least two court hearings and legal wrangles before it can be built.

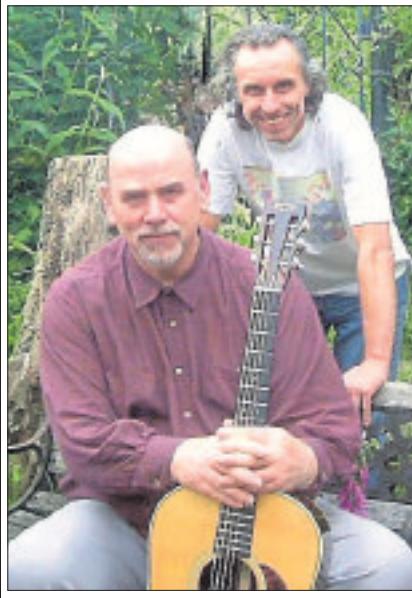
In an attempt to avoid escalating court costs and resolve disharmony, Muslim leaders say they will consider alternative sites.

On a Facebook page purporting to belong to the EDL's Dudley branch two pictures were added, one giving the date of a 'Dudley Demo' and another has 'Dudley we are coming' written on it.

Some 600 EDL supporters came to Dudley to demonstrate against the planned mosque in 2010. Violence broke out and parts of the town were brought to a standstill. Missiles were hurled at police officers and fences were pulled down. Windows were smashed and a number of vehicles were targeted while being driven through the town.

Ahead of a Birmingham protest this year the EDL posted a message on its website, saying: "We went to Dudley twice to protest against the mosque in 2010. In 2014, the plans for the mosque are back and so we must go back."

Festive events at libraries



Brian Dakin (Billy Spakemon), standing, with Laurence Hipkiss

LIBRARY staff are gearing up for a host of festive events in the run up to Christmas. Santa will be dropping into Tipton Library on Saturday from 10.30am-noon as part of the library's annual fun day.

He will also be appearing at Thimblemill Library from 5pm-6pm. On Monday Langley Library will be providing Christmas afternoon tea from 2pm-4pm. Pupils from St. Paul's Primary School will be singing carols at Tipton Library on Tuesday from 10am. A coffee morning takes place at Hill Top Library on Friday, December 19.

Music and comedy are on the agenda with two special events starting at Great Bridge Library on Monday with a Christmas Black Country Night Out in aid of BUDS (Better Understanding of Dementia for Sandwell) featuring poetry from Billy Spakemon, comedy from Marlene the Black Country Wench and music from Scarbally Blues Band and Tipton Community Choir. Tickets are £3 and £1.50 concessions, book on 0121 557 3277.

Station is busiest outside London

PASSENGERS crammed into rush-hour trains will be little surprised to learn that the busiest rail stations, including Birmingham New Street, are getting more crowded.

The number of passengers travelling through New Street rose by 8.3 per cent to 34.75 million last year, new figures reveal. The railway station was the eighth busiest in the country.

It comes as staff at New Street prepare for another busy weekend with thousands arriving in the city for the Frankfurt Christmas Market, which continues until December 22.

Extra security staff have been drafted in to provide crowd control but last weekend the station struggled to cope with passengers outside the station after managers were forced to limit access to the concourse and platforms. People took to Twitter to voice their complaints including one father who claimed his five-year-old child was injured in the crush.

Crowd control measures will again be in place at the station, which is undergoing a £600 million transformation.

The only non-London stations in the top 10 were Birmingham New Street and 10th-placed Leeds. Waterloo in London is the country's busiest.

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Inspection praise joy for online jobs team

A TEAM which helps people learn new skills or gain qualifications to get a job has passed an inspection with flying colours.

Sandwell Council's Online Learning Team gives 'excellent support backed up by an effective information, advice and guidance service,' according to a report.

The news comes as the team opens a new centre in Haden Cross Fire Station, Halesowen Road, Cradley Heath, which will give it more space to increase the number of people it helps.

Set up in 2005, the team runs courses in English, maths, IT and skills such as CV writing which can mean the difference between succeeding and failing in a job interview.

In 2013/14 it helped 522 people achieve an IT qualification, 116 achieve literacy, numeracy and/or language qualifications and 107 achieve qualifications for skills such as time management and team work.

Online & Adult Learning Manager Sally Aherne said: 'It's great to have a pat on the back like this. We are passionate about helping people in Sandwell to improve their numeracy, literacy, IT or employability skills and chances of finding a good job.' The assessment was carried out for Matrix, the quality award for information, advice and careers guidance services.

A PRIMARY school in Oldbury is looking to double in size under plans to rebuild it, in a bid to create hundreds of new pupil places.

St Hubert's Catholic Primary will close its current site in Wolverhampton Road and move a mile to new premises off Moat Road if the proposal is approved.

The school currently caters for 210 pupils but the new site would be for up to 420 children.

by Alex Ross

The spokesperson said: 'The governors of the school ensure that all leaders and staff appointed have the skills and personal qualities needed to bring this to reality.'

'The headteacher and deputy of a Catholic school have to be practising Catholics. All stakeholders in the school are 100 per cent committed to upholding the Catholic ethos and to sustaining the other characteristics of the school which have led to its outstanding provision and reputation.'

'We will continue to work hard to overcome some of the challenges which will surely come also from being an expanded school, further from the church building and with a more varied intake of pupils.'

The school was originally founded in 1937 and has existed in its original building since.

Change

The school will also change its name from St Hubert's to Our Lady and St Hubert's Catholic Primary following a vote by parents.

St Hubert's is currently over-subscribed – the move will increase available class size to 60.

The work is expected to begin at Easter next year with a planned completion date of Easter 2016. Pupils will be moved into the new premises in September.

According to the school its Catholic ethos will remain paramount.

'Old Teddy' rescued from the motorway



Four-year-old Daisy Jewkes gets her lost teddy back from Carillion's Paul Rowton

DAISY Jewkes was left devastated when her teddy bear flew out of the car window as her family travelled along the M6.

Little Daisy thought the little brown bear was gone forever after dropping it from the back seat window of her parents' car while travelling through road works on the M6 near Cannock. But workmen retrieved the treasured toy from the central reservation and reunited the delighted four-year-old with her precious 'old teddy'.

She cried out as she lost her grip of the bear before her mother Nicola agonisingly watched it fall onto the central reservation of the highway, as the family drove back home to Brierley Hill after a family visit to Scotland.

Mrs Jewkes emailed the Highways Agency to look out for the bear. A week later, they responded to say they had found 'old teddy'.

Daisy was reunited with her teddy on her birthday at highway firm Carillion's offices in Cannock and has sent them a thank you letter.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wizzard sax man's funeral date is set

THE funeral of a saxophonist who played with 1970s hitmakers Wizzard will take place next Thursday. Mike Burney, the who played on their massive Christmas hit I Wish It could be Christmas Every day, died last month aged 75 after battling cancer.

The service will be held at Sandwell Valley Crematorium, Newton Road, on December 18 from 2.15pm. It will be followed by a wake at The Wheatsheaf in Birmingham Road, Walsall. Mr Burney, of The Butts, Walsall, performed with a range of music legends – including Sammy Davis Jr, Petula Clark, Steve Winwood and even Bob Hope. But he is best known for his membership of glam group Wizzard, led by Roy Wood.

Rejected car wash bid goes to appeal

AN appeal has been lodged after plans to put a car wash on a pub car park were rejected.

Dudley Council turned down Qamil Aliaj's planning application for the facility at the Full Moon in Hurst Green Road in Halesowen.

Officers said the car wash would result in 'unacceptable levels' of noise and disturbance from waiting cars and equipment.

However, Mr Aliaj has since appealed against the decision.

The proposal will now be considered again, this time by a Government Planning inspector.

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THE Archbishop of Canterbury has come under fire for dabbling in politics regarding his comments about food banks in the UK. An MP warned the Most Rev Justin Welby that he ran the risk of becoming a pawn in a political game. I would perhaps be sympathetic to the MP's point, were the MP in question anyone other than David Mellor.

To be fair, as far as we know, he did resist from calling the Archbishop a "sweaty, stupid little s***", so clearly the man is learning. But I still do not think he is the man to be lecturing the Archbishop about matters of religion.

■■■■■

MEANWHILE, the Archbishop has also suggested we should do our Christmas shopping at charity shops. No doubt, most men will be nodding sagely in agreement, thinking this is an excellent piece of advice. Their wives may need a little more convincing.

■■■■■

OH, and if you didn't know Foggy is this year's winner of I'm A Celebrity. It's not the bloke off Last of the Summer Wine. No idea who he is, mind.

■■■■■

A Christmas card which listed '10 reasons by Santa Claus must live on a council estate' has been withdrawn from sale by Clinton Cards after sparking a storm of protests.

The reasons listed included "He has a serial record for breaking and entering", and "He only works once a year".

One indignant complainant labelled the card "seriously vile", another said it was "beyond offensive" while a third said it was " vilifying and stigmatising the poor for corporate gain".

Oh, do get over yourselves, please. Of course such stereotyping is unfair, and the card probably is in bad taste, but if we start directing so much anger at every dubious joke, what is left for the really serious stuff?

What are we going to ban next? Irish jokes? Mother-in-law gags? Benny out of Crossroads?

Let's face it, Black Country humour is based almost entirely on unfair and outdated stereotypes about flat-capped simpletons with funny accents, and we love 'em.

And earnest po-faced people who use such pompous phrases as 'stigmatising the poor for corporate gain' are invariably the sort of people who hold such prejudices against ordinary people who do not share their supposedly enlightened attitudes. If they met a real Black Country mon, they would doubtless find him uncouth and politically incorrect, in need of 'educating' in the ways of modern metropolitan Britain.

Well, you've gotta loff, as we say in the Black Country.

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A stray horse along Russell's Hall Road, Dudley



Horses round up in Wolverhampton Road East, Sedgley



A bleeding Staffordshire bull terrier injured in Walsall

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

TRY as they might, politicians can't seem to convince people of the benefits of the Black Country and Birmingham teaming up.

UKIP came in for some heavy criticism when it organised a 'hands off the Black Country' protest. Whether you're of the view they're just standing up for people's shared identity or opportunistically hopping on a bandwagon, they would only be able to do so if there was an undercurrent of concern.

It might be fear of the unknown. It might be lack of trust in politicians. It could be a belief this is only the beginning of a big Brum takeover. I don't think for a second it is but there's no getting away from genuine fears held by a lot of people.

Labour councillors have been stressing there is nothing to worry about but perception is everything. For years, the feeling has been Birmingham has done well for investment, while the Black Country has been left with the crumbs off the table.

The combined authority technically already exists. There's a West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority. That covers the four Black Country boroughs and Birmingham, who are signed up to the combined authority plan, plus Coventry and Solihull, who the others are trying to persuade to join them.

All that's really going to be different is the venue they meet at and possibly the councillor chairing it. We've had joint working on transport for years and it's never been as big a political hot potato as this authority, which is also going to look at regeneration and job creation.

Part of the problem has been the name. I don't just mean the toxic idea of Greater Birmingham, which politicians have correctly consigned to the bin. I mean the legal terms being used – 'combined authority'.

'Combined' means to join or merge to form a single unit. That's something the Labour leaders swear won't happen to their respective councils. An 'authority' is something with political or administrative power and control. Councillors are adamant there will be no new layer of bureaucracy, administration or politicians. To all intents and purposes, then, it's a group of people who get together every so often, have a meeting and discuss common aims.

But it's also a mechanism to use whatever powers might be offered to the West Midlands through devolution. Failure to have the authority set up means we could fall further behind the likes of Greater Manchester.

Many people aren't comfortable in that they don't yet know what is being signed up to on their behalf. The combined authority has, by necessity, been set up quickly. But in order to avoid losing the support of the people it was created to serve, it has to show itself to be democratic and accountable.

Owners get a kick out of cruel sport

Fears over fighting dogs and stray horses have been raised by the RSPCA. SIMON STONE reports

IT is part of the shady underworld of the Black Country, where criminals put their dogs' lives on the line in the name of sport.

Dogs are bought and sold, bred and trained all so that callous owners can get a kick from dog fighting.

And, says the RSPCA, the region has seen 'more than its fair share' of cases.

Ian Briggs, chief inspector with the RSPCA special operations unit, has been working on dog fighting cases for 15 years and is in no doubt it still goes on.

"Since 2006, the West Midlands has really had more than its fair share of dog fighting cases," he said. "There have definitely been dog fights held in Wolverhampton and other areas of the Black Country as well."

One high-profile case, in 2008, saw Stephen Wood from Walsall convicted of having four pit bull dogs for the purpose of training them for fighting.

Abandoned

In 2010, dog fighting was said to be on the rise in the Black Country after a spate of seriously injured dogs were found abandoned.

A dog believed to have been beaten to death was found dead under a paving slab in Chaucer Road, Bloxwich in January, while a bleeding Staffordshire bull terrier called Honey limped into a Walsall tyre and exhaust unit in Frysers Road, Bloxwich, after being badly injured in a dog fight weeks later.

A two-year-old female Staffie-type was found dying on a towpath in Bentley, and a dog named Rocco, suffering from 'the worst case of neglect' ever seen by local vets was rescued from Churchill



Richard Marshall with trees used to train fighting dogs in Bearwood Park

Road in Bentley. Elsewhere, a dead Staffordshire bull terrier was found in a box in Newhall Road, Rowley Regis, while a dead pit bull terrier covered in blood was dumped on a busy street in Smethwick.

Concerns have also been raised that thugs are training fighting dogs in Black Country parks. Chunks of bark have been ripped off trees in King George V playing fields in Bloxwich and in Bearwood Park.

Other concerns relate to stray horses, often left to fend for themselves on

Horses can also create problems for pedestrians and drivers if they escape and make their way onto footpaths and roads.

Since 2011, more than 460 horses have been removed from public highways in Dudley alone, with the council spending £100,000 on removing them.

This year eight horses were rounded up by police after they wandered on to grassland in Wolverhampton and were agitated by traffic. The animals were herded onto the forecourt of a petrol station in Wolverhampton Road East, Sedgley.

In February, two caused a stir when they were seen near the ring road on Penn Road in Wolverhampton.

The most recent action in Dudley was taken in October when two horses were seized from council-owned land off Bryce Road, in Briery Hill. The council also posts enforcement notices, warning anyone who may leave their horses on council-owned land that their animals may be impounded.

Tethered

In Sandwell, more than 100 horses have been removed by the council in the past three years, and the authority has spent tens of thousands of pounds on baills to enforce the policy.

Pat McFadden, Wolverhampton South East MP says existing legislation does not go far enough, and that authorities do not get enough support from the government. He claimed horses were being found dead tethered to posts, or were left in such bad condition they had to be put down.

However Councillor Jones said that healthy horses impounded in Sandwell will not be put to sleep, instead being found new homes and even being used by riding schools.

Gemma Stanford, of the British Horse Society, said fly-grazing had become a massive issue across the country and the BHS has been pushing for new, tougher, new legislation.

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Mortgages — borrowers must see sense

RECENT articles state that on the back of new legislation regarding borrowing — making sure people can afford the debt — it is now becoming difficult for people over 40 to take out a new mortgage. This seems to come over as a shock when I would have thought it was common sense.

We made our last house move when I was 38 and one of the reasons for doing it then was that, if we left it much longer, we would be too old to take on a 25 year mortgage. That was way back in 1985. So what has changed? Yes, people will be working a cou-

Merry Hill congestion

ON reading about 'Merry Hell' traffic, it isn't only this time of year that there are traffic problems in and around the shopping centre.

Pensnett Road into Brierley Hill is a disaster, what with no turn-offs.

Then they make High Street, Brockmoor, one-way from the bridge, causing traffic problems in Hickman Road. It used to be a quiet road.

The people who design these road systems don't live anywhere near to them.

The only road to Round Oak is through a council estate where children are prone to the dangers posed by more traffic.

Traffic lights are everywhere in the borough, causing more havoc.

M HAYES
Kingswinford

Slaves in the 21st Century

SLAVERY in modern Britain is a national scandal.

There are an estimated 13,000 slaves in Britain today. There should be a witch hunt throughout the country to find out where all of these slaves are. No stone should be left unturned.

Come on all Christians, live a Christian life, teach your children, put God first, not worldly goods and pleasure.

Jesus said 'Love your God first, then love your neighbour as yourself'.

These two commandments cover all of the Ten Commandments we were taught earlier in the Bible.

To end my letter, you are all welcome to come along and sing with us, those wonderful 'Hymns of Praise'.

V MALPASS
Wall Heath

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Christianity is not just for Christmas

RE — the letters regarding 'Songs of Praise'.

I thank God for the people who through the ages have wrote lovely words and music, for the wonderful hymns we sing today.

As for church attendance decreasing? Churches are always ready to welcome you at any time of the year, not just for baptising, weddings or funerals.

Sometimes we get a full congregation for these services, but do they come again?

The reason? Sunday shopping, football, boot sales, etc, seem to come first.

Thousands signed for the mosque not to be built in Dudley, who, probably say their faith is C of E, or whatever, but do not support their own churches.

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Welcome for rise in visits to libraries

A LEADING councillor in Dudley has welcomed news that thousands of people have visited libraries in the borough in the past year.

A recent survey showed almost 23,000 people paid a visit to one of the borough's many libraries in just a single week in November, a four per cent increase on last year's figures.

Councillor Hilary Bills said: "This increase is a result of all that all our libraries provide, the efforts of our staff and the extensive library stock which includes the latest best sellers."

Stourbridge Library saw the biggest increase, with numbers up almost 25 per cent, followed by Cradley Library where numbers were up 13 per cent.

College name goes up in lights

COLLEGE bosses have followed up their move to bring back the name Stourbridge College with plans to put it up in lights.

The college has announced plans for an illuminated sign at its new campus.

The college took on the Birmingham Metropolitan College name following a merger with the city college last year.

But following the announcement that the Stourbridge College name will return to the town, the college has now had plans approved for the name on a sign at its £6.5 million Hagley Campus.

The campus is due to open in the spring of next year.

The best present you can give the NHS is your blood

SOME blood donations are needed across the West Midlands over Christmas, health chiefs have revealed.

A campaign has now been launched to encourage people to give blood in the coming weeks. This year, as Christmas Day and Boxing Day fall ahead of a weekend, there are fewer donors than usual will get around to making life saving donations.

Across the West Midlands there are over 50,000 registered blood donors.

In total, around 210,000 whole blood donations and 12,500 platelet donations will be needed across England and North Wales over the coming six weeks to help ensure hospitals have the stocks they need to treat patients.

Last year one in five donors missed their appointments – putting NHS Blood and Transplant's critical operation under unnecessary pressure.

Shailesh Mistry, deputy marketing manager at NHS Blood and Transplant said: "At a time when everyone is thinking about the perfect gift for their loved ones, some people will be relying on one gift that really matters – the gift of blood."

Improve

"We're asking new and regular donors in the West Midlands to give blood this December. The gift of a single blood donation can save or improve up to three lives. Don't worry if you've never given blood before, now is a great time to sign up and start giving to help save lives."

Health chiefs say every blood donation is vital, but over winter months there is a particular need to ensure supplies of rarer blood groups. In particular, O Rh negative, the universal blood group, is always in demand and A Rh negative, B Rh negative and AB Rh negative are the other rare groups most vulnerable to shortfall.

A single blood donation can save or improve up to three lives while every platelet donation helps up to three adults or 12 children.

As blood has a shelf life of 35 days and platelets have a shelf life of seven days, it is essential that stocks are continually maintained throughout the year, including during the festive period. Visit www.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 2323.

The success of the group is such that it has taken on 25 new staff over the past three years, taking employee numbers to 60, and Mr Hodgetts anticipates its workforce to increase by another 20 per cent.

Major projects get the go-ahead

A SECOND wave of major housing, transport and job creation schemes across the Black Country are set to get the green light in February.

The news comes after the first schemes under the area's £138 million Government-backed Growth Deal were given the go ahead, with work due to start on many of them in the next few months.

Now the rest of the schemes, part of a £450 million investment in a Black Country 'renaissance', are also set for approval.

Targets

It will mean dates are set for work to start on all the schemes, with set targets for when they are due to be completed and the benefits the area should expect.

The first wave was signed off on Wednesday by the joint committee of the Local Enterprise Partnership, made up of leaders of the four Black Country councils of Wolverhampton, Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell. It includes major expansion at Halesowen and Dudley colleges, further investment in Walsall's Goscole housing project and improvements to the Civic Halls and Grand Theatre in Wolverhampton.

The second wave is set to be signed off in February. The move was agreed in principle at last week's meeting and paves the way for the organisation to meet its target of having the programme ready to start on April 1 next year.

Couple's bid for Christmas



Hoping for chart success — Abby Scott and Chris Eaton

A MUSICAL husband and wife team from Kinver are hoping to top the charts this Christmas after producing song in memory of fallen soldiers.

Musicians Chris Eaton and Abby Scott, from the village near Stourbridge, composed the piece after being inspired by stories of bravery and sacrifice from the First World War.

The song, 1914 — The Carol of Christmas, has already reached the top of the iTunes Christmas chart and now the couple are hoping to reach an even wider international audience.

Charities

All money raised through sales of the song, composed by 56-year-old Mr Eaton, who wrote Cliff Richard's Christmas hit Saviour's Day alongside Judd Field, will go to Armed Forces charities.

Mrs Scott, 29, has a solo on the single and forms part of an ensemble of voices and soloists including Flight Lieutenant Matt Little and 12-year-old Canterbury Cathedral chorister and Radio 2's Young Chorister of the Year finalist, William Inscote.

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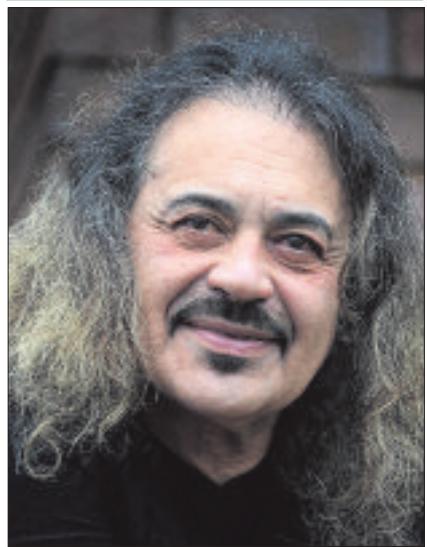
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Wagner is back with new single... and hair



Hair today — X Factor star Wagner, who has a new song out, at home in Halesowen after his hair transplant

X Factor runner-up Wagner Fiuza-Carrilho, who many will remember for his eccentric performances on the top TV show is back with a new single — and thicker hair.

The flamboyant Brazilian-born singer, who lives in Halesowen, took up a career as a tattooist in Kingswinford after his time in the limelight thanks to The X Factor in 2010.

Wagner, remembered for his enthusiastic performances of songs such as Ricky Martin's She Bangs and the B52s' Love Shack, has released a new single Switched on like a Radio. "I am very excited about the single," said the 58-year-old. "On the X Factor I did a lot of covers and to be quite honest I was very sick of singing other people's songs and that was where Switched On Like a Radio came from."

The single is not the only new thing about the singer, who had a hair transplant earlier this year. He said: "I love to perform but noticed my hair was a real mess, and this affected my confidence. I like to take pride in my appearance and keep fit with martial arts. What's the point in working out and having a mutilated head? That is how I saw it."

Group call for better weekend rail service

CAMPAIGNERS are demanding action on 'overcrowded' trains during weekend services through the Black Country, particularly during the run up to Christmas as Birmingham attracts millions of visitors to its German Christmas market.

Members of the Stourbridge Line User Group say train operators should be looking to ease crowding on trains.

The group has approached train operator London Midland calling for them to add more carriages during and after the run up to Christmas and New Year.

Operator London Midland said many of its trains have already been lengthened to allow for more passengers at weekends — a move the group want to see extended into the New Year. User group chairman Rob Hebron said demand was outstripping supply and called on train operators to act.

"It's bad enough that weekday commuters have to put up with overcrowded trains but at weekends the frequency of trains on the Stourbridge line is not good enough, neither are trains with two carriages," he said. "London Midland is pro-

moting the service of up to six trains an hour to Birmingham on billboards, which only applies Mondays to Saturdays."

Group member Bob Randle added: "Trains have been reported 'full and standing' on the London Midland website but anyone passing by Tyseley sidings can often see vehicles sat idle at weekends."

London Midland spokesman Francis Thomas said: "We are experiencing high levels of demand on the Stourbridge line at weekends. This is being driven by the Christmas markets at Worcester and Birmingham. We have been responding to this by lengthening as many trains as we can at weekends."

By Andrew Turton

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Housing group launch a £500k social fund



Investing in skills for youth — Black Country Housing Group chief Amanda Tomlinson with apprentices

A COST-SAVINGS programme at the Black Country Housing Group (BCHG) is to raise £500,000 over three years for community projects and new social enterprises.

Chief executive Amanda Tomlinson said that £165,000 a year was being identified by staff at the not-for-profit organisation, which employs around 200 people.

Blackheath-based BCHG will use the funds in the local community to fund apprenticeships for young people

and build skills through its 'Young Blood' initiative. This aims to double the proportion of younger people in the housing group's workforce, under the age of 25, from five per cent to 10 per cent by 2017.

BCHG also intends to create two social enterprises, to support local community projects and fund local job clubs, as well as a hardship fund for vulnerable customers.

BCHG, now in its 40th year, operates primarily in Dudley and Sandwell but also has homes in Birmingham and Walsall. It currently provides more than 2,000 homes and supports

more than 13,000 people with employment advice, care, support and home improvements. It has contracts with local authorities to provide home improvement and maintenance work as well as running care homes.

Amanda Tomlinson, who took over the £13 million a year business as chief executive a year ago, said surpluses were reinvested into the business to fund growth. It has just secured £12 million of private sector lending to fund new housebuilding — around 200 new homes — and the creation of two care homes in the Dudley area for 130 people with dementia.

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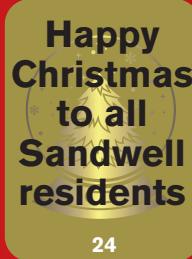
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All collections will return to normal from Monday 5 January 2015.

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Christmas & New Year bin collection dates

Monday 22 December	No change
Tuesday 23 December	No change
Wednesday 24 December	No change
Thursday 25 December	Saturday 27 December
Friday 26 December	Sunday 28 December
Monday 29 December	No change
Tuesday 30 December	No change
Wednesday 31 December	No change
Thursday 1 January	Friday 2 January
Friday 2 January	Saturday 3 January

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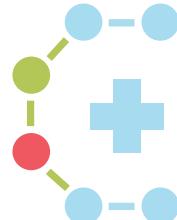
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Pioneer journalist has died aged 83

BLACK Country-born journalist John Beck, who helped found the Shropshire Star in 1964, has died aged 83

A FORMER Dudley Grammar School boy who went on to be one of the founding pioneers of the Shropshire Star, John Beck, has died at the age of 83.

Mr Beck, of Condover, near Shrewsbury, retired in 1991 after a journalistic career of nearly 33 years with the Midland News Association, during which he worked on several different titles including the Chronicle.

His interests in retirement included photography and foreign travel. He had a lifelong love of classical music, and also wrote an autobiography called "Perhaps I'm Really Mervyn Davenport," the story behind the title going back to the day of his birth in 1931.

School

"Mrs Beck had gone in a nursing home in Tipton. The lady in the next bed had a little boy on the same day called Mervyn Davenport," said John's widow, Jean Mary Beck.

"Both John's family and Mervyn's family moved away from Tipton into Coseley and John and Mervyn went to the same school. As a teenager, when he was playing up a bit, mum Beck used to say 'I think they gave me the wrong baby at that nursing home. You must be Mervyn Davenport.' And that stuck."

The book largely focused on his childhood in the Black Country and his early years of journalism, which were broken by a spell of National Service.

She and John married in 1959 but had known each other from an early

"He was very happy. They really looked after him so well at Bayston Hill."

The funeral is at noon next Friday (December 19) at Ermstrey Crematorium, Shrewsbury.

Born in Park Lane, Tipton, John Cyril Beck went to Dudley Grammar School in 1942 and in September 1947 began working at the Herald Press in the town in the proof reading room.

After nine months an urgent plea to editor Norman Braithwaite coincided with a vacancy in the Brierley Hill office of the County Advertiser and he began one of the happiest times of his career, making calls on his trusty bicycle and becoming familiar with all the short cuts through places like Pensnett, Quarry Bank, Kingswinford, Wordsley and Amblecote.

"I was known to every parson and policeman in the area," he was to recall.

In September 1951 he journeyed to RAF Padgate for two years' National Service. On his return to civilian life in 1953 he was back into journalism and was soon writing for the Express & Star in the Stafford office where he took over coverage of theatre productions.

Later he worked in Bilston before becoming deputy editor of the Wolverhampton Chronicle. He and his wife moved to Condover when he joined the team led by first editor Ted Ireland to launch the Shropshire Star in 1964, where he was features editor.

A spell followed with the Birmingham Post and Mail before he returned to the Express & Star as assistant features editor. He finished his career by returning to the Chronicle, where he was deputy editor.

In his younger days John was a keen cyclist and a member of Dudley Cyclists Touring Club. He was for a time on the committee of Condover village hall and used to organise a fundraising annual ball.



Tipton-born journalist John Beck was a keen cyclist and a member of Dudley Cyclists Touring Club

age. "We lived next door to each other from when I was aged three in Woodsetton, just outside Sedgley. My maiden name is Spicer," she said.

The couple had sons Christopher and Michael, both of whom predeceased them.

"In the last three years I have lost all three men in my life," said Mrs Beck.

John had had a stroke last year and went to the Vicarage Care Home in Bayston Hill and died there.

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A wagon holds the Black Country's longest chain



War years — Sedgley Civic Defence General Services at The Limes in April 1945



War time Auxiliary Fire Service Volunteers at The Limes



Historians George Blackham and Martin Jones with Margaret Wenlock, a descendant of Eliza Tinsley

Glimpse into past at Black Country mansion

MEMORY LANE

By Charlie Benton

IT was Sedgley's own Downton Abbey — a mansion built for the family owners of an iron empire making everything from chains, anchors and nails.

Eliza and Thomas Tinsley, of the hugely successful Eliza Tinsley firm now based in Wednesbury, had The Limes built on the grounds of a former pub in Sedgley-Upper Gornal 163 years ago.

Over the years the building has been used by the Catholic Church, local councils and even became the headquarters of the Auxiliary Fire Service during the Second World War.

Thirty years after Eliza Tinsley died, the house was taken over by three other illustrious figures — Henry Fowler, an iron and coal master from Bilton, William Arthur Foster, a solicitor, and finally Eliza Gibbons, widow of John Lloyd Gibbons of Ellowes Hall.

After the turn of the 20th Century, it was used by the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham before being used as the

Fire watchers used the home's high tower to scan the neighbourhood to spot incendiaries dropped as markers by the Luftwaffe.

After the war, the home was used by Sedgley Urban District Council, then Dudley Metropolitan Council before being taken over by two private firms.

The house has now been converted into eight flats and now historians keen not to forget the building's proud history have unveiled an interpretation board telling its story.

One of the historians who gathered the information for the board, Martin Jones, said: "I am a parishioner of the nearby All Saints Church which is the church which Eliza Tinsley used to attend.

"I also used to pass the building every day whilst taking my children to school which was my only real association with the building.

"When I saw there were moves to restore it I made enquiries and started to compile the history of the building which is how I became involved."

Mr Jones was just one of many budding historians who contributed to the information board.

Converted

Although the building has now been converted into flats Mr Jones said he is pleased with it.

"I think the developers did a wonderful job," Mr Jones said. "Other than the demolition of the outbuildings to make room for some extra buildings, the building itself remains identical to the way it would have looked in Eliza Tinsley's day.

"It really is one of the last remaining important buildings in Sedgley and I think it is wonderful that it has been preserved for the future."



Eliza Tinsley - matriarch of the chain making iron master family

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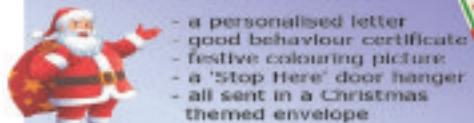
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Our Plaice Fish and Chip shop

is located on Dudley Road, Halesowen B633NJ and is living up to its reputation of serving the Finest Fish & Chips by far. The stylish detached bungalow style shop standing in its own grounds with car parking for in excess of 40 cars is being run by 3rd generation Oliver Howard, The recent make over by Ollie is just the start of things to come for the Family run shop, which has come

a long way since its starting point back in 1968 when Ollie's Nan spotted an opportunity to fire up the frying range in the front room in Colley Gate in the Black Country.

To this day Traditional Fish & Chips are delivered to Parties, Weddings and functions in our custom designed boxes and we will not be beaten on price.



Outside Our Plaice Fish and Chip shop with seating area



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Manager Ollie serving up some more Award Winning Fish and Chips

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Monday 22 December	12 mid day 10pm
Tuesday 23 December	12 mid day 10pm
Wednesday 24 December	11.30am - 2.30pm
Thursday 25 December	Closed
Friday 26 December	Closed
Saturday 27 December	12 mid day 9pm
Sunday 28 December	Closed
Monday 29 December	12 mid day 9pm
Tuesday 30 December	12 mid day 9pm
Wednesday 31 December	12 mid day 7.30pm
Thursday 1 January	Closed
Friday 2 January	12 mid day 10pm
Saturday 3 January	4.30pm - 8.30pm
Sunday 4 January	4.30pm - 8.30pm

Then back to our normal 7 days opening hours

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Pompeii, Capri and the Bay of Naples

Eight days various departure dates



PRICE FROM

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Italy is a superb destination for a holiday, with its stunning blend of excellent food and wine, gorgeous scenery, together with an enviable climate and a phenomenal cultural legacy.

The Sorrento peninsula and the Bay of Naples is simply one of the most beautiful corners of Europe, attracting visitors for centuries in search of its outstanding scenery, tranquility and some wonderful historic sites.

Sorrento, the base for this holiday, is delightful and so typical of the south of Italy, with tiny cobbled streets, quaint squares with flowers, tubs of geraniums and winding streets lined with tall, seemingly crumbling buildings, now home to superb shops and cosy restaurants.

Price includes:

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation in Sorrento
- Guided tour of Pompeii
- Walking tour of Sorrento
- Cruise to Capri
- Tour of Amalfi coast
- Visits to Vesuvius and Ravello
- Visit to Naples Archaeological Museum
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability – supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally

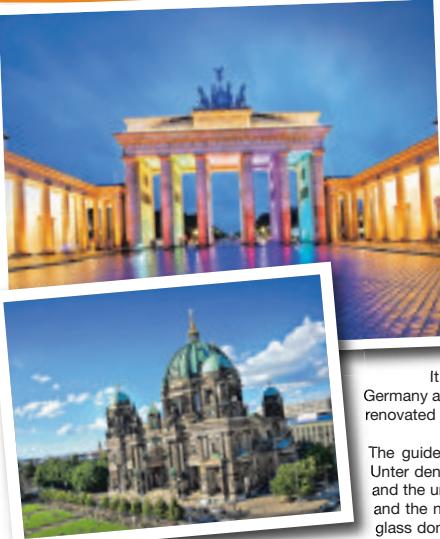


The Bay of Naples skyline is dominated by the majestic and still-active Vesuvius, which rises to over 4,000 feet and has erupted in spectacular fashion several times in its history, including the obliteration of Pompeii.

In the cosmopolitan city of Naples the Archeological Museum houses some of the historical treasures excavated from Pompeii and Herculaneum. And of course, Pompeii itself, is astonishingly preserved and visitors are moved by the sheer scale and eerie atmosphere.

The journey around the legendary Amalfi coast, which is said to be Europe's most beautiful, takes in the cliff-clinging resort of Positano, the picturesque village of Amalfi itself and Ravello, where visitors can see amazing views over the coastline.

Capri, an island renowned the world over for its outstanding natural beauty, attracted Roman emperors and many famous people and it is not difficult to see why, especially with the chance to visit the famous Blue Grotto, a large cavern which can only be reached by boat.



Berlin

Four days various departure dates



PRICE FROM

£419

Berlin has a unique atmosphere created because of its remarkable history and of course this year marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of the infamous Berlin Wall which once divided the city in two.

The capital is one of the most vibrant cities in Europe, with many attractions to explore.

It is possible to see the difference between the old East and West Germany and even now Trabant cars, synonymous with the East, have been renovated and considered trendy.

The guided tour introduces visitors to the old heart of the city including Unter den Linden; the beautiful green area of the Tiergarten; the cathedral and the university, once numbering Albert Einstein amongst its professors; and the new seat of Government, the Reichstag, covered by an immense glass dome designed by Sir Norman Foster.

Then there are the symbols of Berlin, the Brandenburg Gate and what remains of the wall itself. However, the city is not all about war and politics, there are many parks to be explored and of course Germany is home to over 500 breweries with Berlin having its own fair share.

Away from the city the itinerary features a visit to Potsdam and the Sanssouci Park housing the palaces of the most famous Prussian monarch, Frederick the Great, including the well-known Palace of Sanssouci. This delightful palace now rises from the park and crowns a series of ascending terraces affording a panoramic view of the spectacular 740-acre park below.

The holiday includes three nights accommodation at the four-star Movenpick hotel, in the former Siemens factory. It is centrally located near Potsdamer Platz, with easy access to plenty of shops, restaurants, bars and cafes.

Price includes:

- Return flights
- Three nights bed and breakfast accommodation
- Guided tour of Berlin
- Visit to Potsdam and Sanssouci Park including Rococo Palace
- Services of a tour manager
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Here are just three holidays taken from their 2015 brochure.

Riviera Travel – ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430

India and Nepal

15 days various departure dates



PRICE FROM

£2,159

This 15-day touring holiday encompasses the very best that Northern India has to offer – from fascinating Delhi and the Taj Mahal to Varanasi, one of the oldest cities in the world. And then, in complete contrast, there's Nepal for the chance to seek out rhinos, bears and tigers, share the peace and tranquility of the Buddhist monks and take a once-in-a-lifetime flight to see Mount Everest.



Tours of New and Old Delhi introduce the major sights. New Delhi is a wonderful city that clearly reflects the legacy of the British Raj. Surprisingly green, it is divided by wide tree-lined avenues with the Presidential Palace at its centre.

While in Old Delhi there's the Red Fort, one of the world's great fortifications with huge walls nearly two miles long. And the city is also home of the Raj Ghat, a memorial to the great Mahatma Gandhi.

For most, the highlight of the trip will be the chance to visit the Taj Mahal, undisputedly one of the world's most stunning buildings. Built from dazzling marble its colour changes from white to yellow, cream and almost to orange. Nearby is the 11th century Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Constructed from red sandstone, the building dominates the surrounding area.

A visit is made to Orchha to discover the 14 cenotaphs with parrots and vultures circling these mystical buildings and the chance to marvel at the palaces of the Orchha Fort complex and admire the fine architecture.

There's also the chance to see some of Khajuraho's remarkable temples, one of the seven wonders of India and another UNESCO World Heritage site. Originally 85 temples were built between the 10th and 12th centuries and today, 22 of these mystical shrines survive.

The tour of India concludes in the city of Varanasi, a labyrinth of tangled alleys, shops and workshops and it's from here an exciting rickshaw trip down to the river gives an insight to the pilgrims washing in the holy waters and a boat trip takes in the incredible waterfront to witness the Aarti, an impressive Hindu ceremony.

Nepal is completely different to India, and a visit is made to the famous 14th century Boudhanath Stupa, one of the holiest Buddhist sites. Hear the gentle sound of chanting and praying filling the air.

Kathmandu, capital of Nepal, is one of the world's most naturally beautiful countries, set in a bowl-shaped Himalayan valley 4,500 feet above sea level. This captivating city and Nepal's cultural heart is surrounded by breathtaking snow-capped mountains and from here a flight, weather permitting, gives passengers the chance to photograph Mount Everest from the cockpit of the aircraft.



Take the scenic drive to Chitwan National Park, Nepal's most famous wildlife reserve and one of the finest in Asia. From here visit a local village by ox cart to learn how local people live in a sustainable manner and cross a river on elephant back to observe the animals in their natural habitat and hopefully see the elusive Bengal tiger – a truly unforgettable experience.

Pokhara in central Nepal, is another highlight of the holiday, a charming lakeside town, located in a beautiful area with unbeatable views of the Annapurna mountain range.

Accommodation ranges from a three-star lodge in Chitwan National Park to five-star luxury in Delhi and Kathmandu.

Price includes:

- Return scheduled flights
- 13 nights accommodation in a selection of hotels with daily breakfasts and five meals
- Visits to the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Orchha Fort and some of Khajuraho's temples
- Boat trips on Ganges and lake in Pohkara, rickshaw ride and elephant-back safari
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School is now on the road to recovery, say inspectors

A SECONDARY school has been taken out of special measures – one year after its new headteacher vowed to drive up standards.

Dormston School, in Mill Bank, Sedgley, does still require improvement but Ofsted removed the school from special measures.

The education watchdog rated categories of leadership and the behaviour of pupils as 'good'.

By Alex Ross

one with high expectations. It said the behaviour of students was good and they had responded well to the headteacher's appointment.

The inspectors said teaching had improved but was not consistently good. The progress of pupils was also still not good enough, according to the report, which put it down to a 'legacy of underachievement' now being addressed.

He said: "We are pleased that the school has been removed from special measures. We recognise and feel the report is a fair reflection of improvements made over the past year and we will continue to work to become an outstanding as quickly as possible. Our next target is to make sure our exam results in the summer are what we expect from a good school."

Buoyed by the latest Ofsted report, he is now targeting further improvement before inspectors return in two years.

He added: "We don't see this as a quick fix, this is the first step along the way to becoming a very good school."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin welcomed the Ofsted report. He said: "This is a huge step in the right direction."

Mr Stitchman, his colleagues and the school governors have kept their promise to get the school out of special measures in a year and I am sure the school will continue to improve in the future."

The report followed an inspection on November 18 and 19. It said Mr Stitchman had been 'highly effective' in re-shaping the school to

"While we understand that in the run up to Christmas some people within our communities may have financial concerns, this does not excuse wasting police time and endangering the lives of others."

'Babby' Jesus is subject of service

THE 'babby' Jesus was taking centre stage as Tipton Civic Society held its special Black Country Christmas concert.

Nine readings and nine carols were being performed in the Black Country dialect in front of 200 people at a concert yesterday evening (Wednesday).

The civic society has been holding the event for over 22 years and in the past it has been televised and played live on radio.

Each year the concert is held in a different church and the concert always has a good turn out.

Guitar

As well as the concert and church service, musician Kenny Craig was also playing his guitar and getting the church singing along.

Chairman of the society, Ray Brothwood MBE, said: "The Black Country and its dialect needs to be kept alive and this is a great way for us to do it. We always have a really good turn out and the church is always full."

For those who may not be so familiar with the dialect, Mr Brothwood and the society offer lessons on the readings to enable more people can take part in the concert.

He added: "In the past we have even had people from Australia come and have a go at the lessons and it is always great fun."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Finance boss is new deputy leader

DUDLEY Council's new deputy leader has been elected as part of a re-shuffle following the resignation of its former leader, to concentrate on a national role.

Councillor Stuart Turner, also cabinet member for finance, has taken on the role of deputy to newly appointed council leader, Councillor Pete Lowe. The reorganisation took place after Councillor David Sparks decided to step down.

Councillor Sparks will remain in the council's cabinet, taking on the new role of combined authorities.

Councillor Stuart Turner, deputy leader of Dudley Council, said: "In my role as cabinet member for finance I know first-hand how difficult times are as we look to deliver services with hugely reduced budgets."

Injured woman is taken to hospital

AN elderly woman was taken to hospital with head injuries after she was struck by a car in Stourbridge.

The woman was taken to Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital following the incident that happened in Highpark Avenue in Wollaston shortly before 3pm on Monday.

The driver of the car, a Lexus, was left shaken but unhurt.

During the accident the vehicle also went through railings near to the Gate Hangs Well pub.

Police closed off Bridgnorth Road while the vehicle was recovered.

It's Blue Suede pews at mission

AN Elvis Presley impersonating clergyman from Worcestershire will be performing gospel songs at Overend Methodist Mission on Sunday from 6pm.

Rev Andy Kelso, who has appeared on TV, is currently touring in Austria but will be returning to sing at the church in Bannister's Lane, Cradley.

Church worker Margaret Bradley said: "Andy wowed everyone when he came to perform his tribute act earlier in the year, so we thought that it would be good to invite him back to sing some of the Christmas songs that Elvis made famous. All are welcome to come along."

See www.overend-methodist.com for further information.

BUS fare increases across the Black Country have been condemned by councillors

National Express West Midlands announced last week that fares are set to increase by five per cent on January 2. For example, adult single tickets will rise from £2.10 to £2.20.

But Wolverhampton councillor Ian Claymore, who is also a member of transport body Centro, said the hike would be too costly for passengers.

"This will have a detrimental effect on the fare paying customers who use the National Express service," he said.

The bus company has said the new fares will support record investment into the region's bus network in 2015, including £34 million being spent on new buses.

Struggle

Councillor Claymore added: "I think you will find with the financial return that National Express present, they more than met their particular targets and I am sorry to see that they haven't taken that into consideration."

Dean said he was delighted to have won the competition, adding: "Since getting my apprenticeship at Doosan Babcock, this is the best thing that has ever happened to me in my career."

"I'm really proud to have won the competition and I'm looking forward to doing more to help promote welding as a worthwhile job to other young people."

More than 100 trainee welders applied to take part in this year's SkillWeld competition and Dean was shortlisted for the final stage of the competition after scoring highly in the regional heats earlier this year. Competitors from SkillWeld2014 could be selected to compete for their country at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi in 2017

FUTURISTIC designs of a £20 million scheme for Dudley which aims to change the face of rail travel nationwide has been unveiled.

The town will be home to a pioneering Very Light Rail (VLR) line as well as its research hub.

The innovative centre will be built at the closed Dudley railway station and the line will be opened to connect with heavy rail at Dudley Port.

The service linking passengers to the national rail network for the first time in 50 years will be used to pioneer the developing technology, which is based on the Stourbridge Shuttle, while also bringing more tourists to Dudley Zoo, the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Canal Trust.

It is hoped the line could be extended to Dudley town centre. This is the first image released by architects showing what the National Centre for Development of Very Light Rail Technology in Dudley will look like. A testing platform sits at the heart of the three-storey building, while offices and a visitor area will be inside.

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Police closed off Bridgnorth Road while the vehicle was recovered.

Schools' dinner money bid made

DUDLEY Council bosses have given the go-ahead for two schools to apply for £450,000 to bring kitchen and dining facilities up to scratch.

Netherton Coffe Primary School and Lutley Primary School in Halesowen and are both looking to secure cash for the work because they are struggling to provide free school meals. Boss of children's services Councillor Tim Crumpton has approved the bid, saying: "It is hoped that the entire bid will be successful."

Poet is appointed to judge contest

DUDLEY poet Liz Berry has been invited to judge a national competition. There is a £500 first prize for the winner of the 2015 Interpreter's House Poetry Competition.

Liz, from Sedgley, won this year's Forward Prize for the best first collection for her selection of poems called Black Country.

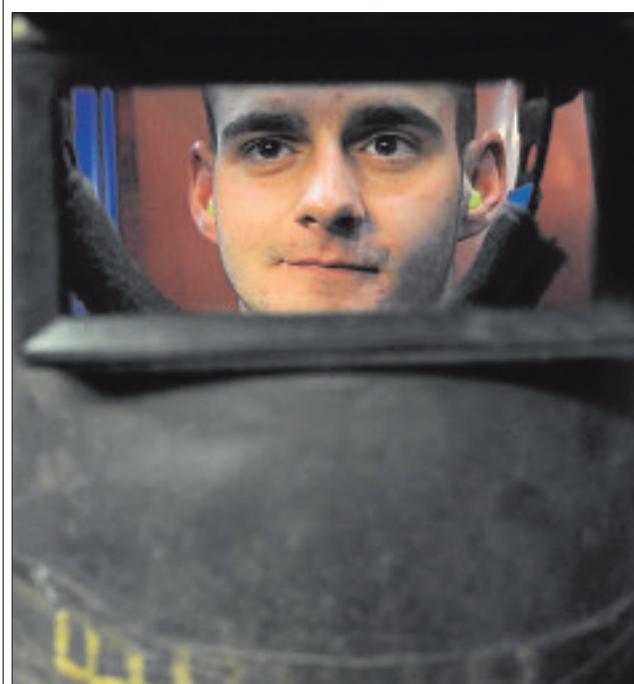
Artist's vision of Very Light Rail HQ



An artist's impression of the Warwick Manufacturing Group's Very Light Rail hub in Dudley

Bus firm's five per cent fare hike is condemned

Skilful Dean is the top trainee welder



AN APPRENTICE from the Black Country has been named the country's most talented trainee welder.

Dean MacDonald, who works at Doosan Babcock in Tipton, took the title after successfully completing four challenges.

The 20-year-old competed alongside nine other finalists from across the UK at The Skills Show at the NEC in Birmingham. He demonstrated his skills with carbon steel, stainless steel and aluminium using a combination of techniques.

Dean said he was delighted to have won the competition, adding: "Since getting my apprenticeship at Doosan Babcock, this is the best thing that has ever happened to me in my career."

"I'm really proud to have won the competition and I'm looking forward to doing more to help promote welding as a worthwhile job to other young people."

More than 100 trainee welders applied to take part in this year's SkillWeld competition and Dean was shortlisted for the final stage of the competition after scoring highly in the regional heats earlier this year. Competitors from SkillWeld2014 could be selected to compete for their country at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi in 2017

they have every right to do under the existing arrangements.

"I think they should have given consideration to the consequences of this particular decision," he added.

Walsall councillor Richard Worrall, who is also a Centra member, believes there is no need for a fare increase as the cost of fuel has gone down in recent weeks.

He said: "The question I would have for the bus company is, haven't fuel costs sunk by 20 per cent over recent months?"

"So operating costs are falling because of the substantial drop in the cost of fuel — that is a matter of fact."

Fare increases were never good news, he said, and public transport in this country was already 'quite expensive' when compared with other countries.

"If people have to pay full fares, it is actually quite a lot of money. It is not very good news, not unexpected, but not very good news," he added.

National Express West Midlands spokesman Jack Kelly said student rates would not be affected.

From Striking Santa and Angels who read all about it – the modern take on the festive story

FROM a disillusioned Father Christmas to a James Bond parody of saving a kidnapped Saint Nicholas and the birth of Jesus told from the perspective of a sheep – the traditional school nativity has evolved as the years have gone by.

And at least one Black Country school has dispensed with it altogether, although stressed it was still keeping the spirit of Christmas alive.

The only school that responded to an Express & Star survey and said it was not doing a nativity play was Ocker Hill Academy in Tipton.

The junior school's principal Adam Hollyhead said: "We don't do a play. The last few years we have hosted a Christmas carol concert at our local church, St Marks.

"We help raise funds for the church at the same time. We like to think we are keeping the true spirit of Christmas alive."

Some have brought in plays such as Santa's On Strike, by Andrew Oxspring. The play features a disheartened Father Christmas who thinks children no longer deserve presents. But then he gets shown pictures of family life to persuade him Christmas is still a time of giving. Schools that

By Dan Wainwright

are doing Santa's On Strike, including Brierley Hill Primary School and Cannock's Bridgton Primary School, are also having traditional nativities. Some schools leave the nativity to one year group and have others perform songs and plays that look at different aspects of Christmas.

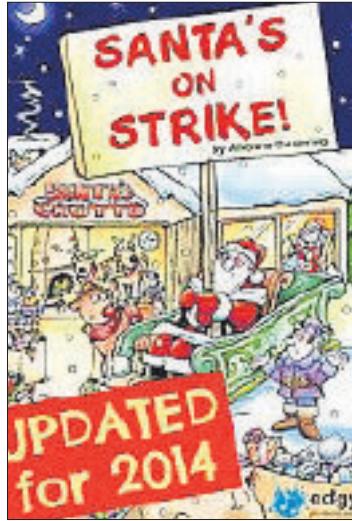
But in the vast majority of responses, the story of Jesus in the manger, the three wise men, shepherds watching flocks and a star above Bethlehem was there in some form.

The nativity also takes centre stage in schools in Dudley, although there are other plays performed as part of the concert.

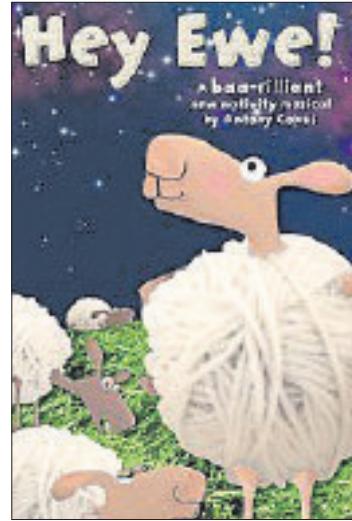
Lee-Anne Knowles, assistant headteacher at Brierley Hill Primary School said: "We are performing three plays this Christmas. Nursery and reception are putting on 'Our First Nativity'.

Years one and two are doing one about Santa going on strike which is more modern. Years three to six are also doing a more modern one called 'Christmas is Forever' which is a parody of James Bond where Santa is stolen and they have to get him back."

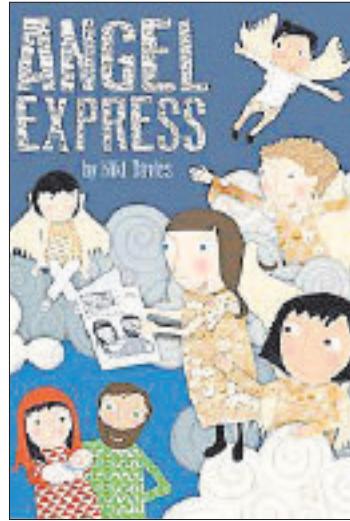
Queen Victoria School in Sedgley did a modern nativity called Angel Express and a version of A Christmas Carol.



Santa's on Strike has an 'optional' nativity scene



Hey Ewe tells the story from a sheep's perspective



Angel Express is a modern nativity for infants

True meaning of Christmas still alive and well, despite claims made in survey

Traditional nativity play remains stable in schools

By Dan Wainwright

IS there really no room at the inn for a traditional nativity? That's the conclusion of users of a parenting website who believe just a third of schools still put on a Christmas play focussing on the birth of Jesus.

Political correctness in a multicultural society has been blamed. But an investigation by The Chronicle's sister publication The Express & Star found that, in the West Midlands at least, the true meaning of Christmas is alive and well in schools.

Dozens of primary schools in Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall, Sandwell and Staffordshire were contacted asking for details of their Christmas concerts.

And all but one that replied includes a traditional nativity as part of it – albeit some with a more modern take featuring a striking and disillusioned Father Christmas, angels learning of the birth of Christ from a newspaper and stories told from the perspective of a sheep.

Spaceman

According to Netmums, just a third of UK schools now put on the traditional nativity play.

The survey found aliens, recycling bins, a Lord Sugar-style 'Lord Christmas', Elvis, footballers, a lobster, a napkin, carrots, sprouts, a pumpkin and a spaceman instead.

Around 47 per cent offer an 'updated' nativity, and one in eight have dropped the Christian references.

That is not the case in the Black Country and Staffordshire, although some schools tell different versions of the nativity, including one or two that do it from the perspective of the angels or even from the perspective of the sheep. Hey Ewe is one such play, being put on by Cannock's Chads Moor Community Infants and Nursery school.

According to the website Out Of The Ark, where the plays are sold, it is a 'straightforward but original' nativity play told from the perspective of a curious sheep'.

Duncan Cocker, headteacher at Villiers Primary School in Bilton, was surprised by



Children at Villiers Primary, Bilton, in their nativity play. Head Duncan Cocker said he was surprised by the Netmums poll results

the survey results. He said: "I did wonder when I saw the figure about one third doing the nativity whether that meant it was only a nativity they put on with nothing else."

"Our reception Christmas production is entitled The Bossy Fairy. The story highlights the true spirit of Christmas and also works in the retelling of the nativity through our children's marvellous acting, singing and dancing skills. All 80 children were involved in this wonderful performance."

The nativity was very much the focus at SS Mary and John's Catholic Primary Academy in Wolverhampton. Principal Joanne Hanslip said: "We will be performing two nativity plays; one which is a modern nativity play

script telling the traditional nativity story; and our second which is the traditional nativity story accompanied by traditional and modern carols and interspersed with readings from the Bible."

Bilston's Wilkinson Primary School is involving all 427 children in performances in the new school hall, built following a devastating fire in 2011. Two groups of children will perform nativity stories while the older children are putting on Cinderella, family liaison officer Carol Duffield revealed.

Claregate Primary School is also doing nativity plays and carols. Headteacher Mick Murphy said: "The children at Claregate are performing Christmas songs for parents of

nursery children, an early years nativity, a Key Stage One nativity and the school choir perform a Christmas carol concert."

"We also have a visit from Santa and the parents and teachers association pay for a Christmas pantomime for years one to six and entertainment for nursery and reception children."

St Luke's Primary School in Blakenhall is doing a performance called Prickly Hay which is a musical based on the nativity. Children in years three to six are participating in an evening Christmas Concert where the children sing traditional carols and Christmas songs, read poems and readings from the bible which are all based on the na-

tivity. Russells Hall Primary School is doing traditional nativities.

And Anne Elledge from Emmanuel School, Walsall, said children had plenty of tradition in their plays too.

She said: "We are staging a Christmas play, involving all classes. It is based around the Russian traditional tale of Baboushka, who hosted the wise men on their journey to Bethlehem."

"They invited her to travel with them, but she had too much to do to clean her house, so said she would catch them up later. But she was too late, so still searches for the Christ-child, and when she sees a baby, leaves a toy, just in case."

"As part of the production we will do a traditional stable scene, there will be a snowflake dance, Russian folk dance, cleaning 'stomp', and of course some songs."

"Quite separate from the play, we also take Christmas out into the community. The key stage two classes sing carols at Walsall Centre for the Blind, key stage one do a little performance for the Afro-Caribbean Community singing club for elderly people, and the choir sing carols at a care home."

Topics

Netherton Primary School staged two traditional nativities – one in school and one at a church. But headteacher Andrew Rushton said there was another aspect to this year's Christmas concert. He said: "We are also holding a First World War concert, following this term's topics which have all been based on the Great War."

St James Primary School in Oldbury is putting on a Wriggly Nativity, which is designed for children to be able to move about while singing instead of sitting still.

Sacred Heart Primary in Tipton is putting on a nativity but also doing Aladdin as a Christmas pantomime.

None of the schools who responded to the E&S said they were removing the Christian references. But Netmums said its survey of 2,000 parents across the country had found cases where school Christmas plays incorporated references to the Muslim festival Eid, the Jewish Hanukkah or Hindu Diwali.

Siobhan Freegard co-founder of Netmums, said: "Do they know it's Christmas? At some schools, it seems not."

"While the UK is a diverse and multicultural society and it's right children learn about all religions and cultures, many parents feel the traditional nativity is being pushed aside."

Hundreds take on fun events to raise vital funds for charities



Striking a pose for the Mary Stevens Hospice Santa jog, Stourbridge



Two young girls complete with red nose at the Stourbridge event



A competitor warms up for the Mary Stevens Hospice Santa jog

Tis the season for Santas to get running boots on



Limbering up for the Acorns Hospice fun run



Heading for Acorns Santa Run at Walsall Arboretum



Natalie Farouz and Betty the dog at the arboretum



Youngsters are seen getting into the seasonal spirit at Tettenhall College Santa Dash



A crowd of people dress as Father Christmas to raise money for Acorns Children's Hospice



Two Father Christmases running and a-leaping



Now you see us – Santas appear from behind the trees



Four festive fundraisers at Tettenhall College

HUNDREDS of people braved the elements to enjoy some festive fun and raise money for a host of good causes.

Crowds of people donned their Father Christmas costumes to take part in annual Santa Runs in Walsall, Tettenhall and Stourbridge over the weekend.

On Saturday, the festive run took place at Tettenhall College, then on Sunday there were runs held at Walsall Arboretum and Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge.

At Tettenhall, pupils, as well as family and friends, took part in the mile long run around the school grounds to raise money for Compton Hospice's Journey Appeal for bereaved families.

Deb Liddle, librarian and charity organiser at the school, said: "It started off just a way for pupils to get

involved with charity work and it has been going on for three years, getting bigger each year.

"We have done some fundraising but we specifically wanted to do the Santa Run for the hospice because not many people know about it, especially the Journey Appeal, which does great work for bereaved families.

The event was also attended by Vicki Wootton and Simon Cater from the Compton Hospice.

Miss Wootton said: "We found out about a month ago that the school had chosen to do it for Compton Hospice.

"The service helps so many families through bereavement so any money raised is fantastic."

Mr Cater said: "The Santa Run has always been very successful and for Tettenhall College to support the hos-

pice is absolutely fantastic. We need to raise over £6 million a year just to keep the doors open, most of which is donated by the local community.

"Events like this are great because it all adds up and goes towards the final pot. We are so appreciative."

Councillor Andrew Wynne, who joined in with the race with his children, said: "I think it is a wonderful cause.

Gathered

"It will raise lots of money for the charity and the turnout was absolutely fantastic. It is particularly good fun for the kids, too."

At Walsall, more than 250 people, young and old, gathered for the run, which raised cash for Acorns.

The charity, which has a hospice in Walstead Road, Walsall, hopes to raise around £35,000 from the event.

Shujea Khatun, major events officer at Acorns, said: "It

was a fantastic spectacle to see so many Santas in one place and wonderful to see so many friends and families having a brilliant time while raising money.

"A big thank you to everyone who took part – the atmosphere was magical and it feels like Christmas has well and truly arrived. Shujea added: "Acorns relies on fundraising and donations for the majority of its income so events like the Santa Run have a real impact. It's not only a great way of having fun but it also helps us carry on our work."

The event was supported by Western Power Distribution which means all monies raised will go directly towards funding the £8 million plus a year it costs to run the three Acorns hospices.

Hundreds of people also turned out for the 5km run in Stourbridge, which raised money for Mary Stevens Hospice.

Duty calls for all armchair marines

GAMES

By Leon Burakowski

THE blockbuster Call of Duty franchise has been given a turbo-boost by the arrival of its latest incarnation, Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare (18).

This takes the all-conquering first person shooter video game 40 years into the future, the globe-trotting adventure beginning with a scenario of a North Korean invasion of its southern neighbour, with you among the US marines called in to even up the odds.

Where this scores over last year's slightly disappointing CoD: Ghosts is the amazing array of future weaponry, such as huge walking tanks and swarms of killer drones. This includes the ultimate accessory, an exo-skeleton giving your average grunt super-human strength and speed.

Developers Sledgehammer have learned from other newly popular arrivals, such as Titanfall, whilst the publisher Activision has the big bucks to attract A-list talent Kevin Spacey to add his voice and image to the project, as the world's most powerful private military contractor.

Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare has superb visuals and wisely blends the traditional first person shooter elements that made the game popular in the first place with enough futuristic twists and whistles to keep franchise fatigue at bay. Reviewed on X360 and available on all major platforms.

Based on Nickelodeon's sequel to Avatar: The Last Airbender, The Legend Of Korra (12+) is Activision's stylish beat-'em-up game featuring a feisty two-fisted heroine and her polar bear/dog Naga. The game, as reviewed on PS3, is good looking in the anime style thanks to Bayonetta mak-



Futuristic firefight — a scene from Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

ers Japan's Platinum Games and true to the TV show. The repetitive waves of enemies can get tedious but there is usually a new challenge around the corner to keep the player engaged as you utilise Korra's control of the elements to progress. It's also available for PC, PS4, Xbox One and X360.

Let's get ready to Rumble... the wildly imaginative **Digimon All-Star Rumble** (7) sees the Digimon monsters pitted against each other in a series of gladiatorial bouts, available in different modes, with 12 of the creatures to choose from. The action is fast and furious, bizarre and colourful in the latest addition to Bandai Namco's Digimon universe. The game is available for PlayStation 3 and X360.

For Nintendo 3DS, **Tenkai Knights: Brave Battle** (7), also from Bandai Namco, is another game based on an animated TV series/toy tie-in with robotic hi-tech machines facing off against each other. But it is just too generic, too run-of-the-mill to please any but the most undemanding fans of the TV show, and doesn't really make the most of the 3D facility.

Adventure Time is without doubt the funniest and most surreal work of animated TV genius since SpongeBob SquarePants. In fact, the story of Finn the Human and Jake his shape-shifting dog and their adventures in the Land of Ooo is possibly the oddest TV show ever and I warmly recommend a journey into the world of children's TV to check it out. I wish I could say the same for its latest game spin-off **Adventure Time: The Secret of the Nameless Kingdom** (7), available for X360, PS3, PC and here reviewed on 3DS. It's a slightly retro top-down view puzzle solver but never quite employs enough of the TV show's hip humour to overcome a fundamentally dull game. Also from Little Orbit comes **Penguins of Madagascar The Video Game** (3), a tie-in with the new movie, which is available for 3DS, Wii and Wii U and is aimed at younger gamers. Swap between the penguins and solve puzzles in the pursuit of their much-loved cheese puffs. It's not too demanding but the familiar Penguin humour adds to the enjoyment.

Idyllic park in such a beautiful county

TRAVEL

CORNWALL — such a long way but always worth it.

For me, when the weather is good, as it was for my family's visit, there is no better place to holiday.

After spending so long on the road, it is good to relax and get away from it all, and that is exactly what we were able to do at Trevella Holiday Park.

The award-winning Five-Star caravan and campsite is in Crantock, just three miles away from Newquay.

Major attractions like the famous Fistral beach, Minack Theatre, Lost Gardens of Heligan and the Eden Project are a short drive away, not forgetting the coastal resorts of St Ives, Padstow and Falmouth. We even took in Land's End.

Picnic

But when not travelling around to see the sights and sounds of the beautiful county, Trevella itself has such a lot to offer, creating that perfect family destination.

Our superior caravan, with decking to allow occupants to sit around and socialise, could accommodate up to eight people. It overlooked the popular playground, which also allowed for a kickaround or picnic.

There is a heated outdoor pool, a games room, with pool table and arcade machines and a crazy golf course. Visitors are also well-served for provisions with an on-site shop and cafe and two well-stocked fishing pools.

Trevella is in a secluded spot, which for me adds to its attraction as one can avoid the hustle and bustle of major holiday camps. Yet, there so much to see and do on the doorstep. Crantock beach is just a short walk away. And



The playground and green are features of the idyllic Trevella Park, Cornwall



The Safari tents have been set up for that extra adventure at the site

whatever one's preferred accommodation, Trevella has it covered, with two lodges also available for extra luxury.

Trevella has for 16 years in a row won a David Bellamy Gold Award and claimed a bronze award in Cornwall Tourism's Holiday Park of the Year awards 2014. General manager Kieran Lynch, said the park's setting and its 'Simple Pleasures' maxim were the main reasons behind its success.

Trevella welcomes touring caravans, motorhomes and campers. Pets

are also welcome. Holidays at Trevella Park start from just £561 in June for seven nights staying in a Luxury-grade static caravan with three bedrooms. Caravan and camping pitches start from only £18.80 per pitch per night.

In keeping with its aim to make a holidays a simple pleasure, the park has introduced safari tents and a guide to 50 Great Adventures. Find out more at www.trevella.co.uk or call 01637 830 308 to check availability.

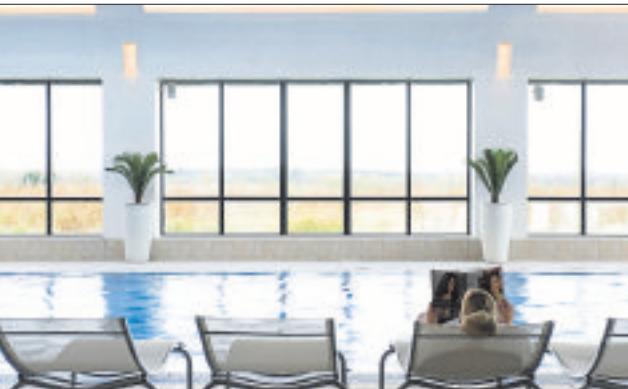
Mark Shipp



A chance to recharge the batteries at the spa in Leicestershire



Attractive areas to sit and walk around



Beautiful views from the 25-metre pool



Enjoy the Three Rs at Champneys Spring

Pop open the Champneys and enjoy the feeling of total bliss

TRAVEL FOCUS

By Lisa Williams

essential information given, we were ready to go.

There is loads on offer. Gym, workout classes, pool, steam room, sauna, spa treatments, bikes to ride around the grounds or just lounging around.

We wanted to start off with some energetic exercise so ventured to the well-equipped gym. After our brief session it was time to find our room and get ready to relax and enjoy a bit of pampering.

It felt peculiar at first, wandering around in a regulation robe and flip flops in the company of strangers. But it's what you do, so we did, and it's amazing how quickly it feels perfectly normal.

We ambled about taking in the different areas.

There are plenty of rooms and areas full of chairs, sofas, chaise longues for you to chill out. There's even a little snug with a

chess board, blankets and internet access if you really can't face being completely cut off from the world. We had no time for that though as our pre-booked thalassotherapy pool session beckoned. It's something neither of us had ever heard of but were intrigued to find out more.

The giant Jacuzzi-type pool is filled with mineral-enriched waters meant to aid well-being. Wading in was lovely – it was really warm and inviting.

Wellbeing

There are different areas within the huge pool all with hydrotherapy jets that stimulate and tone tired, aching muscles. Great for us as we both do a lot of running.

It's also good for treating cellulite, arthritis and muscular or joint aches and pains. It was heavenly. Be prepared; it's not gentle, there are no soft bubbles like a Jacuzzi but more intense jets.

We both left the pool with little red blotches on our bodies but feeling great and de-stressed. Keeping with the watery theme it was time to try out the beautiful pool next

door. All this doing very little is tiring so it was great having a room as a base. Our haven was simply decorated with two comfy and sumptuous armchairs.

We could shower, watch a bit of TV, read magazines and chatter away while we decided how we would relax next.

For me it was the bamboo massage. I had visions of large canes being inflicted on me. Treat or torture? Turns out it was a bit of both. It's not for the faint-hearted. There's no gentle, tickly massage.

The therapist oiled up some thick bamboo canes rolling them over my legs, arms and back to stretch and massage my body. The pressure was quite intense but I quite liked it and came out feeling relaxed with silky smooth skin.

Ravenous from all our activities dinner was a welcome prospect. The menu is carefully put together and indicates, fibre, fat, wheat-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, options.

The rooms all have DVD players so a film and bed was the perfect end to the day.

For more details visit www.champneys.com/spa-resorts/champneys-spring

Chuckle time at next year's panto

THIS year's Grand pantomime has only just took to the boards but already next year's festive stars have been revealed.

The Chuckle Brothers will star in 2015 festive season's Grand Theatre pantomime, returning to the theatre for their first Wolverhampton panto in 22 years. They will star in Peter Pan, which kicks off a six-week run on December 12 next year.

This year's panto — Cinderella — had raked in £1 million before the show opened on Saturday.

The last panto appearance by the Chuckle Brothers at the Grand was Snow White and the Seven Dwarves with Linda Lusardi. Tickets for next year's panto go on sale today (Thursday).

Festive matinees at Symphony Hall

CHRISTMAS week will see afternoon festive concerts being held at Birmingham Symphony Hall.

On Monday, December 22, Jonathan Cohen hosts a Christmas Carol Sing-along from 2.30 featuring special guest Alison Jlear, the London Concert Chorus and London Concert Orchestra. On Christmas Eve, from 2.30, the London Concert Orchestra are joined by Birmingham Choral Union and Staffordshire Children's Choir, plus guest tenor Ed Lyon, for The Glory of Christmas with music from Rutter, Handel, Schubert and Bach. See www.thsh.co.uk or call 0121 345 0603.

Seann to be wild with comic as long as he goes to right city

Cinders already a success

PANTO season is with us once again and this year at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre it's Cinderella, which is set to beat box office records.

The show stars camp comic Julian Clary, Hollyoaks' Joe Tracini, former X Factor finalist Niki Evans and 19-year-old debutant Alice Baker as Cinders.

As he prepared for his role as Dandini, Clary explained his love of panto: "It is a true art form, something that is very different from anything else I do but at the same time one of the most enjoyable. For it to work the cast has to really feed off each other and bring the audience into play. You always get so many unexpected things happening in the panto world."

Grand Theatre chief executive Peter Cutchie said audiences could expect to see 'a truly spectacular family pantomime'. It runs until January 18



Stars of the Grand panto Julian Clary, Alice Baker as Cinderella and Joe Tracini

IT'S all happening for comedian Seann Walsh at the minute.

The floppy-haired funnyman is on tour with a date to come in Wolverhampton. His debut DVD *Seann To Be Wild* has been released and two more series of the comedy panel show *Virtually Famous* — on which he is a captain — have been recommissioned.

All this on top of a sell-out run at the Edinburgh fringe. He really is living the dream.

"Stand-up was what I always wanted to do, since watching the likes of *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* as kid," said Walsh. It has earned him a Leicester Mercury Comedian of the Year Award, a Chortle Best Breakthrough Act nominee and an award as Best Comper.

Wulfrun

With support from Mark Simmons, the comic says he is enjoying the tour so far, entitled *Seann Walsh: 28*, ahead of a date at Wolverhampton's Wulfrun Hall on Thursday, December 18.

He promises this time he will turn up — and at the right venue, too. Recently Walsh was forced to call off a show, and apologise, when he arrived in Hereford instead of Hertford.

And, the last time in Wolverhampton, he says he was too ill to perform, though soldiered on regardless.

I had to sit down the whole time, I shouldn't re-



Comedian Seann Walsh

ally have been there," he said. "So if anyone saw that gig, it wasn't really me."

Offstage, Walsh is trying to add to his acting credits. He appeared in *The Bill* in 2007 and in the sit-com *Big Bad World*.

He writes, alongside his friend Henry Packer, and is happy enough to make a living from making people laugh, particularly as, in his words: 'I don't really work too hard'.

Tickets for the Wulfrun Hall gig, which starts at 8pm, are available on 0870 3207000 or at www.wolvescivic.co.uk website.

Slade party night among top gigs

THE *Fab*(ricated) Four come to Wolverhampton tomorrow night (Friday) when the Bootleg Beatles play the Civic Hall.

On the same night, next door at the Wulfrun, Chrisse Hynde of The Pretenders is in concert, after this year proving she's still a force to be reckoned with on acclaimed solo album *Stockholm*.

Expect a raucous night with *Buster Bloodvesell* and co when *Bad Manners* play the Robin 2 in Bilston tonight (Thursday). *Guitar legend Michael Schenker* plays the Robin 2 on Tuesday and their former Wyre Forest rock 'n' roller *Mike Sanchez* brings his *Portions* to Bilston on Wednesday. Then next Thursday *Dave Hill* and *Don Powell's Slade* have a Xmas party.

Comedy central at the Civic halls

THERE'S festive fun in store with a feast of comedy in the run up to Christmas. *Wolverhampton* is comedy central, starting tonight (Thursday) when *Omri Djalili* brings his *Iranalamadindong* to the Civic Hall. He is at the *Symphony Hall* tomorrow.

Jimmy Carr's Funny Business tour is at the Civic on Saturday and comedy veteran *Ken Dodd* performs Sunday. *Lee Mack* has sold out Tuesday and Wednesday nights at the Civic. *Seann Walsh* is at the Wulfrun next Thursday (see main article) and *Roy Chubby Brown* will be rude and crude at the Civic next Friday. Call 0870 320 7000.

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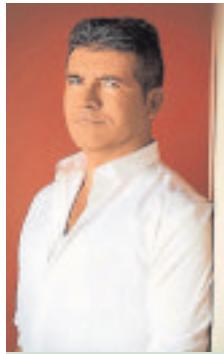
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CHOICE



Simon Cowell

The X Factor (ITV, 8.30pm)

This is it then – the first stage of the 2014 sing-off when we see who has the right stuff to walk away with the prize money. Not that winning the show matters that much of course; even getting through to this stage of the game can be such a massive boost to any aspiring TV presenter or reality star looking for a spot in the Big Brother house; next year's I'm A Celebrity... or even, dare we say it, a pop career of their own. As the judges repeatedly reminded us the other week, "Literally anything can happen". So, as the remaining acts battle it out in part one of the final, settle back and enjoy as the lucky few attempt to hold their nerve and sing for their lives. Your host is Dermot O'Leary, while Simon Cowell, Cheryl, Mel B and Louis Walsh will be passing judgement.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. **12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Gymnastics World Cup. **3.00** Cycling: Tour de France. **5.10** Final Score. **5.10** A Question of Sport. (R) Weather; **6.00** Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong quizzes eight chart-topping singers – Paul Young and Carol Decker, Sheila Ferguson and Dano, Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott, and Keith Duffy and Mikey Graham. **6.50** Strictly Come Dancing. Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present the semi-final of the ballroom battle, in which the remaining five couples will be hoping to pull off their best performances yet as they tackle two dances each. Judges Len Goodman, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcie Bussell give their verdicts on the routines, but the all-important votes from the viewers decide who will waltz into next week's final and compete for the glitterball trophy. The results are tomorrow at 7.20pm. **8.25** Atlantis. As the gang is chased round an ancient burial ground by an army of undead flesh-eaters, and Jason battles for his life within the caves. **9.10** Casualty. A ceiling collapse at the cathedral leaves several of the congregation trapped; Lofty helps a patient who thinks he is Jesus and Zoe catches Max spying on her and Dylan. **10.00** The National Lottery Live. Jenni Falconer is joined by supergroup McBusted as she reveals the numbers for the Lotto and Thunderball draws. **10.10** BBC News: Weather. **10.30** Match of the Day. Dan Walker presents highlights of the latest Premier League clashes, including Chelsea v Hull City at Stamford Bridge and Arsenal v Newcastle United at the Emirates Stadium; National Lottery Update. **11.55** The Football League Show. Mark Blundell presents highlights and all the goals from the latest fixtures in the Championship, League One and League Two. **1.15** Film: Black Eagle. (1988) **2.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.55** BBC News. **2.10** This Is BBC Two.

BBC2

6.00 CBBC. **11.00** The Blue Planet. (R) **12.00** James Martin's Food Map of Britain. (R) **12.20** Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey. (R) **1.20** The Rockford Files. (R) **2.05** Film: Funny Girl. (1968) Musical biopic of Fanny Brice, starring Barbra Streisand. **4.30** Andrew Marr's The Making of Modern Britain. (R) **5.30** Restoring England's Heritage. **6.00** Secrets of the Castle with Ruth, Peter and Tom. Ruth Goodman, Peter and Tom Pinfold examine the ways in which every aspect of the construction of a castle required the stonemasons, blacksmiths and carpenters to coordinate their efforts – from making and sharpening tools, to processing wood, and securing timber scaffolding on the castle walls. Peter and Tom help fix the Guedelon water mill, which is having major teething problems, and the team follows the progress of the construction of a wooden walkway connecting the chapel tower with the Great Hall. (R) **7.00** Flog It! Adam Partridge and Catherine Southon value items brought into the town hall in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, while Paul Martin visits the Bronte Parsonage Museum in Haworth. **8.00** Perry and Croft: Made in Britain. The concluding episode of the celebration of writing duo David Croft and Jimmy Perry, examines how the duo's comedies each encapsulated the end of an era. Last in the series. **8.30** Dad's Army. Jonesy's van runs out of petrol and the platoon is forced to spend the night in a spooky deserted house, where the men's imaginations soon run wild. (R) **9.00** QI XL. Extended edition. Sara Pascoe, Jack Whitehall, Adam Hills and Alan Davies attempt to answer host Stephen Fry's range of fiendish questions. **9.45** Tomorrow's Worlds: The Unearthy History of Science Fiction. Dominic Sandbrook traces the use of time travel in the genre, from The Time Machine to Doctor Who, With David Tennant, Christopher Lloyd and Scott Bakula. Last in the series. **10.45** Film: Let Me In. (2010) Horror remake, starring Chloe Grace Moretz and Kodi Smit-McPhee. **12.35** Film: Forbidden Planet. (1956) **2.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.05** Cannibals. (R) **7.10** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. (R) **1.30** The Meltdown, Live coverage from Cheltenham and Gloucester. **3.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.55** Channel 4 News. **6.00** 100 Greatest Toys with Jonathan Ross. A countdown of the nation's favourite games, gadgets and playthings, as decided by a Channel 4 online poll. Inventors and toy-makers tell the inside stories of their creations and successes – including Action Man, Yahtzee, Barbie and Trivial Pursuit – while the children of yesterday, namely today's celebrities, authors, actors and journalists, take a nostalgic look back at the toys they loved. Also revealed is the inspiration behind the design of the Raleigh Chopper, the unlikely individual responsible for the creation of one of the world's top tourist action figures, and why the Vietnam War almost brought Britain's Matchbox car range to an end. (R) **9.00** Film: Hope Springs. (2012) Premiere. A middle-aged married woman feels her long-standing relationship with her unadventurous husband is becoming stale. When she hears of a marriage counsellor offering therapy sessions in his remote retreat, she persuades her reluctant spouse to join her for a week with the doctor, rediscovering why they fell in love in the first place. Romantic comedy, with Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones and Steve Carell. **11.00** Film: An Officer and a Gentleman. (1982) A Navy recruit has an uneasy romance with a factory worker and is pushed to his limits by a tough sergeant. Romantic drama, starring Richard Gere, Debra Winger and Louis Gossett Jr. **1.20** Film: Q&A. (1990) Thriller, with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton and Arnold Aspinall. **3.35** Film: Holyoaks. (2012) Ste returns to the village. (R) **5.45** NFL: Rush Zone. Animation about a young American football fan.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 NFL: Rush Zone. **6.35** Trans World Sport. **7.30** Survival of the Fittest. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** Weekend Kitchen. **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Marvel's Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. (R) **1.30** The Meltdown, Live coverage from Cheltenham and Gloucester. **3.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.55** Channel 4 News. **6.00** 100 Greatest Toys with Jonathan Ross. A countdown of the nation's favourite games, gadgets and playthings, as decided by a Channel 4 online poll. Inventors and toy-makers tell the inside stories of their creations and successes – including Action Man, Yahtzee, Barbie and Trivial Pursuit – while the children of yesterday, namely today's celebrities, authors, actors and journalists, take a nostalgic look back at the toys they loved. Also revealed is the inspiration behind the design of the Raleigh Chopper, the unlikely individual responsible for the creation of one of the world's top tourist action figures, and why the Vietnam War almost brought Britain's Matchbox car range to an end. (R) **9.00** Film: Hope Springs. (2012) Premiere. A middle-aged married woman feels her long-standing relationship with her unadventurous husband is becoming stale. When she hears of a marriage counsellor offering therapy sessions in his remote retreat, she persuades her reluctant spouse to join her for a week with the doctor, rediscovering why they fell in love in the first place. Romantic comedy, with Meryl Streep, Tommy Lee Jones and Steve Carell. **11.00** Film: An Officer and a Gentleman. (1982) A Navy recruit has an uneasy romance with a factory worker and is pushed to his limits by a tough sergeant. Romantic drama, starring Richard Gere, Debra Winger and Louis Gossett Jr. **1.20** Film: Q&A. (1990) Thriller, with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton and Arnold Aspinall. **3.35** Film: Holyoaks. (2012) Ste returns to the village. (R) **5.45** NFL: Rush Zone. Animation about a young American football fan.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.20** Access. **10.30** World Strongman Championship. (R) **11.25** Film: Ice Age: The Meltdown. (2006) **1.10** Film: The Christmas Bunny. (2010) **2.00** Film: Family Drama, starring Sean Bean. **2.55** Film: Angels and Ornaments. (2012) **3.00** Film: The Promises. (2012) **4.40** Film: Mrs Miracle 2: Miracle in Manhattan. (2010) Family drama sequel, starring Doris Roberts. **6.30** Film: Mistletoe Over Manhattan. (2011) Santa Claus's wife goes to New York to perform a Christmas miracle and give her husband fresh inspiration. She befriends a cop who is in the middle of a divorce and offers to become a nanny to his children. She then discovers he still loves his wife, and tries to find a way to bring them back together. Seasonal fantasy, starring Tricia Helfer and Greg Bryk. **8.15** My Crazy Christmas Obsession. Documentary following four American households who take festive decorations to the extreme, spending huge amounts of money, time and energy on their properties to bring Christmas cheer to their neighbourhoods. In Oklahoma, Shelly has 168 trees of all shapes and sizes in her home, festooned with more than 50,000 ornaments and 100,000 fairy lights. (R) **9.05** 5 News Weekend. **9.10** 50 Greatest Magic Tricks. (2012) Illusionist David Blaine sawing ladies in half, catching bullets between their teeth, reading minds and performing feats of escapology for decades. David Blaine's 50 greatest tricks, including the astonishing set-pieces of Penn and Teller, the mind-bending of Derren Brown and the street magic of David Blaine. It features spectacular illusions, such as making the Statue of Liberty disappear, intimate card tricks and the lighter side of the business, thanks to the inclusion of comedy great Tommy Cooper. Paul Daniels and Dynamo also appear in this magic compendium, with contributions from Joe Pasquale, Dick and Dom, and Stephen Metherell. **12.05** SuperCops. **3.10** Gotham. (R) **4.00** Hospital Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.00** Film: Captain Newman MD (1964) **5.00** Live FIA Formula E Championship. The Punta del Este ePrix. **7.30** Film: Licence to Kill. (1989) **10.15** Film: Scarface (1983) **1.35** Alias Smith and Jones **2.40** Movies Now **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **4.45** Engagement **4.00** Happy Endings **4.45** The 100 **5.15** Film: First Daughter (2004) **3.15** Rude (1974) Tube Shorts **3.30** Made in Chelsea **4.35** Melissa & Joey **5.30** How I Met Your Mother **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** Rue Tube **11.55** The Intwisters **1.05** The Cleveland Show **3.15** Rules of Engagement **4.00** Happy Endings **4.45** The 100 **5.15** Film: First Daughter (2004) **3.15** Rude (1974) Tube Shorts **3.30** Made in Chelsea **4.35** Melissa & Joey **5.30** How I Met Your Mother **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Mechanic (2011) **10.50** Rue Tube **11.55** The Intwisters **1.05** The Cleveland Show **3.15** Rules of Engagement **4.00** Happy Endings **4.45** The 100 **5.15** Film: First Daughter (2004) **3.15** Rude (1974) Tube Shorts **3.30** Made in 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DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Doctor Who **8.00** Top Gear **9.10** Sherlock **10.40** Live at the Apollo **11.10** Family Guy **12.55** American Dad! **1.20** Some Girls **1.45** Sweat the Small Stuff **2.15** Live at the Apollo **2.45** Deep Dive **3.00** Close

BBC Four

7.00 Ice Age Giants **8.00** Sex and Sensibility: The Allure of Art Nouveau **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.50** The Richest Songs in the World **12.20** Sounds of the Sixties **1.20** Top of the Pops: 1979 **1.55** Ice Age Giants **2.55** Sex and Sensibility: The Allure of Art Nouveau **3.55** Close

ITV2

11.20 The Cube: Celebrity Special **12.20** You've Been Framed! **12.50** Film: Twins (1988) **3.00** Film: Secret Santa (2003) **4.50** You've Been Framed at Christmas!

7.00

7.00 Pearl Harbor **8.00** Doctor Who **9.00** Formula 1 **10.00** Formula 1 **11.00** The Xtra Factor **11.35** Celebrity Juice: Christmas Special **12.35** The X Factor **12.35** Nicole Scherzinger: The Hot Desk

CHOICE



BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** Fern Britton Meets Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD Extra. With Mark Chapman and the Match of the Day team. **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. **2.15** Comes Under the Hammer. **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.15** Lifeline. **4.25** Songs of Praise. (R) **5.00** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.50** BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

6.20 **Countryfile.** The team is in the Cheshire range in north Wales, where Ellie Harrison meets schoolchildren running their own chicken farm and Matt Baker joins a conservation team in the uplands. Including Weather for the Week ahead.

7.20 **Strictly Come Dancing: The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkleman present as five become four, determining the line-up for next week's final, and there is a performance by Paloma Faith.

8.00 **Sports Personality of the Year 2014.** Gary Lineker, Gabby Logan and Clare Balding present this year's ceremony live from the Hydro Arena in Glasgow, where the successor to Andy Murray will be crowned. The contenders for the main prize include Rory McIlroy, who dominated the golfing scene and won two of the year's four Majors, Lewis Hamilton, whose victories on the way to title glory saw him surpass Nigel Mansell as the British driver to have won the most Formula 1 races, and Anna Tikhonova, who claimed gold in the skeleton. The other nominees are Gareth Bale, Mark Whitham, Adam Peaty, Carl Froch, Charlotte Dujardin, Jo Pavey, plus Paralympic skier Kelly Gallagher and guide Charlotte Evans. Subsequent programmes subject to change.

10.20 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.

10.45 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, including Manchester United v Liverpool and Swansea City v Tottenham Hotspur.

11.45 **The Apprentice.** (R) **12.45** Film: It's a Wonderful Afterlife. (2010) **2.20** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Animal Park. (R) **6.30** Match of the Day at 50. (R) **7.35** Life in a Cottage Garden with Carol Klein. (R) **8.05** Countryfile. (R) **9.00** The Football League Show. (R) **10.20** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.50** Rick Stein's Christmas Special. (R) **12.30** James Martin's Food My Way of Britain. (R) **1.00** The Queen's Favourites. (R) **5.00** The Lady. (1975) Musical comedy sequel, starring Barbra Streisand. **4.05** Film: Emma. (1996) Jane Austen drama, starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

6.00 **Sport Personality of the Year at 60.** Gary Lineker presents a look at the history of the ceremony, which has become a sports and broadcasting institution since first being held in 1954. Former winners including Steve Redgrave, Princess Anne and Sebastian Coe recall their memories of the show. Des Lynam discusses his years presenting the awards and Sue Barker is among the contributors remembering the special awards given to the likes of Muhammad Ali and Abby Robson. (R)

7.00 **James May's Toy Stories: Flight Club.** The Top Gear presenter investigates the enduring appeal of the model aeroplane and sets out to break the British record for the longest flight by a toy glider. (R)

8.00 **Film: What Women Want.** (2000) A fresh graduate gives a womanising executive the ability to hear the thoughts of the opposite sex. Embittered after losing out on promotion to a female colleague, he uses his new-found talent to exact revenge – but the insight it provides ultimately brings out an unexpected sensitive side. Romantic comedy, starring Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt, with Marisa Tomei, Alan Alda and Bette Midler.

10.00 **Russell Howard's Good News.** The comedian offers his perspective on stories dominating the media. (R)

10.30 **Film: Mrs Henderson Presents.** (2005) A widow invests her fortune in an abandoned London theatre and, despite laws to stage a controversial nude revue, fact-based comedy drama, with Judi Dench and Bob Hoskins.

12.10 **Film: A Walk to Remember.** (2002) **1.45** Sign of the Cross. (R) **2.30** Motorsport UK. **3.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **4.05** ITV Nightshift. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.05** Cannimals. (R) **7.10** Signed Stories: Shaz a Story. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** The Animaniacs. (R) **7.45** Ultimate Spider-Man. (R) **8.10** Santa's Little Helpers. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. **8.30** Big Time Rush. (R) **8.45** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **10.25** Murder. She Wrote. (R) **11.25** TV News; Weather. **11.30** Film: Problem Child. (1990) Comedy, starring John Ritter. **1.05** Tipping Point. (R) **2.05** You've Been Framed! (R) **2.35** The X Factor. (R) **4.40** Film: Death Becomes Her. (1992) Black comedy fantasy, starring Goldie Hawn and Meryl Streep.

6.35 **Regional Programme:** Weather.

6.45 **ITV News:** Weather.

7.00 **Catchphrase Christmas Special.** Former glamour model Katie Price, actor-presenter Warwick Davis and pantomime king Christopher Biggins line up to 'say it and save it' as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in theme-styled animated clues and win thousands of pounds for their chosen charities. Stephen Mulhern hosts.

8.00 **The X Factor Results.** With part one of the final behind them, this is the last chance for the two remaining acts to impress the public in the race to become this year's X Factor winner. The judges offer their comments as usual, but the result is entirely in viewers' hands, and at the end of the programme, Dermot O'Leary reveals which of these aspiring pop stars will walk away with the prize of a record deal. There are also performances from more world-famous acts, sending the show out on a high. Last in the series.

10.05 **Film: The Holiday.** (2009) Two single women from opposite sides of the Atlantic find love after they swap houses over Christmas. Romantic comedy, with Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet, Jack Black and Jude Law. Continues after the News.

11.05 **ITV News:** Weather.

11.20 **Film: The Holiday.** (2006) Concluded.

12.45 **On the Phone: Home shopping.** **2.30** Motorsport UK. **3.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **4.05** ITV Nightshift. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **Two.**

CHANNEL 4

6.10 **NFL: The American Football Show.** (R) **7.10** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.35** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Breakfast. (R) **1.00** The Big Band Theory. (R) **1.45** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** Film: 10 Things I Hate About You. (1999) Comedy, starring Heath Ledger and Julia Stiles. **5.00** Film: Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian. (2009) Fantasy comedy sequel, starring Ben Stiller.

7.05 **Channel 4 News.**

7.30 **Britain's Wildest Weather 2014.** This year, the nation has been hit by tornadoes, floods, hurricanes and ferocious storms, as well as the chilliest August in more than two decades, but the public has also enjoyed the hottest Halloween on record. This documentary presents eyewitness footage of an unpredictable 12 months, featuring rescues at sea, homes struck by lightning, an escape for 500 cows, and sea foam that engulfs a bus. There's also a look at the science behind these wild weather events and why there may be worse to come.

9.00 **Homeland.** The security breach at the embassy has a number of far-reaching consequences, as the fourth season of the CIA thriller continues. Claire Danes, Rupert Friend and Mandy Patinkin star.

10.00 **Film: Inglourious Basterds.** (2009) A family driven from their house by a haunting discover the sniffs have followed them to their new home and put their son into a coma. Horror, with Patrick Wilson and Rose Byrne.

12.00 **Alan Carr: Chatty Man.** The host is joined by Stephen Fry and Clare Balding, talking about their new books, and Mickey Flanagan, discussing his latest DVD. Plus, Gorgon City perform with Jennifer Hudson. (R) **1.00** American Football Live. Philadelphia Eagles v Dallas Cowboys (Kick-off 1.30am). Coverage of the week 15 fixture from Lincoln Financial Field, where the NFC East rivals face each other. **4.45** NFL: Rush Zone. Animation about a young American football fan who must protect shards of a power source called The Core, which is hidden in various NFL stadiums. **5.10** Face the Clock. (R) **5.35** Coronation Street. **6.00** Band of Brothers, with Dictionary Corner guest Arlene Phillips. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 **Milkshake! Peppa Pig.** **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.30** Pip Ahoy! (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.55** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.05** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.25** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. **7.30** Milkshake! Milk & Honey. (R) **8.00** **Peppa Pig.** **8.15** The Adventures of Bottles. **8.20** Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Wanda and the Alien. **8.35** Mio Mao. (R) **8.40** Zack and Quack. **8.50** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.35** Access. (R) **10.45** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.40** Film: Dear Secret Santa. (2013) Premiere. Drama, starring Tatyana Ali. **2.30** Film: Deck the Halls. (2006) Christmas comedy, starring Danny DeVito and Matthew Broderick. **4.20** Film: Paper Angels. (2014) Premiere. Festive drama, starring Josie Bissett.

6.15 **Film: A Christmas Kiss.** (2011) Premier. An aspiring designer impulsively kisses a man she meets in a lift, only to discover he is her boss's boyfriend. She is given the task of decorating his house for a lavish Christmas party, but begins to fall in love with him – while he does not remember their previous encounter. Romantic drama, with Laura Breckenridge, Brendan Fehr and Elisabeth Rohm.

8.00 **The Abba Years.** Documentary exploring the success of the Swedish group, featuring interviews with the band members and footage of concerts and stage shows. Filmed in Sweden and London, the programme explores the flamboyant outfits, chart-topping music, successful spin-offs, marriages and break-ups. (R)

9.00 **Michael Bublé's Christmas Special.** The Grammy-winning Canadian crooner performs classic festive songs. (R)

9.55 **5 New Weekend.**

10.00 **Britain's Favourite Christmas Songs.** A countdown of songs guaranteed to make any Christmas party go with a swing, including classics by The Jackson 5, Jona Lewie, Band Aid, Mud, the Pogues and Kirsty MacColl and Slade. (R)

1.00 **Abba: In Concert.** (R) **2.00** SuperCast. **3.00** World Strongman Championship. (R) **4.00** The Doctor Who. **4.45** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great TV Mistakes **7.30** Doctor Who: The Ultimate Guide **7.40** Doctor Who: The Day of the Doctor **9.00** Top Gear: Polar Challenge **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** American Dad! **11.30** Some Girls **12.00** Sweat the Small Stuff **12.30** How Safe Are My Drugs? **1.30** The Revolution Will Be Televised **2.00** Some Girls

BBC Four

7.00 The Fairytale Castles of King Ludwig II with Dan Cruickshank **8.00** Rome: A History of the Eternal City **9.00** Pompeii: The Mystery of the People Frozen in Time **10.00** Pillars of Creation – The Sky at Night **10.30** Queen: Days of Our Lives **12.30** Great American Rock Anthems: Turn It Up to 11 **1.30** Sounds of the Eighties **2.00** Natural World Special: Miracle in the Marshes of Iraq

ITV2

11.00 The X Factor **1.10** The Xtra Factor **2.10** Kylie Minogue: The Hot Deck **2.25** Film: Santa Baby. (2006) **4.15** Film: Beethoven's Christmas Adventure (2004) **6.00** Film: The Polar Express (2004) **8.00** Film: Porcupine **9.00** Educating Joey **9.30** Film: The Essex-Pedersen **10.00** The Xtra Factor **11.00** Film: American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile (2006) **2.10** The Vampire Diaries

ITV3

11.15 A Touch of Frost **1.35** Rosemary & Thyme **2.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.50** Film: Olympia: The Forgotten Lady (1975) **6.50** Inspector Morse **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Cracker **1.15** Film: The Count of Monte Cristo (2002)

ITV4

11.35 Film: Captain Newman MD (1964) **2.10** Film: Ice Cold in Alex (1958) **4.50** Film: The Battle of Midway (1976) **7.30** Star Wars **9.00** Film: Doctor (2005) **11.05** Film: Species: The Awakening (2007) **1.10** River Monsters **2.10** Nitro Circus **2.50** ITV4 Nightshift

E4

12.30 Made in Chelsea **1.30** Film: Step Up 3 (2010) **3.50** Rudel (sh) **Tube Shorts** **4.45** Film: The Battle of Midway (1976) **7.30** Star Wars **9.00** Film: Doctor (2005) **11.05** Film: Species: The Awakening (2007) **1.10** River Monsters **2.10** Nitro Circus **2.50** ITV4 Nightshift

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ITV

11.35 The Battle of Midway (1976) **2.10** Film: The Polar Express (2004) **4.00** Film: Porcupine **5.00** Educating Joey **6.00** Film: The Essex-Pedersen **7.00** The Xtra Factor **8.00** Film: American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile (2006) **2.10** The Vampire Diaries

ITV2

11.15 The X Factor **1.10** The Xtra Factor **2.10** Kylie Minogue: The Hot Deck **2.25** Film: Santa Baby (2006) **4.15** Film: Beethoven's Christmas Adventure (2004) **6.00** Film: The Polar Express (2004) **8.00** Film: Porcupine **9.00** Educating Joey **9.30** Film: The Essex-Pedersen **10.00** The Xtra Factor **11.00** Film: American Pie Presents: The Naked Mile (2006) **2.10** The Vampire Diaries

ITV3

11.15 A Touch of Frost **1.35** Rosemary & Thyme **2.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.50** Film: Olympia: The Forgotten Lady (1975) **6.50** Inspector Morse **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Cracker **1.15** Film: The Count of Monte Cristo (2002)

ITV4

11.35 Film: Captain Newman MD (1964) **2.10** Film: Ice Cold in Alex (1958) **4.50** Film: The Battle of Midway (1976) **7.30** Star Wars **9.00** Film: Doctor (2005) **11.05** Film: Species: The Awakening (2007) **1.10** River Monsters **2.10** Nitro Circus **2.50** ITV4 Nightshift

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MONDAY

The Real St Nick, Channel 5, 2pm

An injured man is brought into hospital dressed as Father Christmas, and when he comes round, he claims to really be Santa, landing himself in the psychiatric ward. Romantic comedy, with Torrey DeVitto and Callard Harris. (2012)

TUESDAY

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, ITV, 7.30pm

The young wizard struggles to convince his fellow sorcerers that the evil Lord Voldemort has returned to life. Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint, Gary Oldman, Michael Gambon and Alan Rickman. (2007)

Waterworld, ITV, 10.40pm

In the future, environmental disasters have left the planet flooded. A web-footed mutant mariner helps a woman and an orphan girl search for a mythical haven of dry land – but in the process has to fend off a villainous crew of nicotine-addicted pirates. Sci-fi adventure, starring Kevin Costner, Dennis Hopper, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Rick Aviles. (1995)



Waterworld, Tuesday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY

The Bandit of Sherwood Forest, Channel 4, 2.35am

The son of Robin Hood reunites his father's merry men to carry out a rescue mission at the request of the Queen Mother. Swashbuckling adventure, starring Cornel Wilde and Anita Louise. (1946)

THURSDAY

Mr St Nick, Channel 5, 11.40am

Father Christmas decides it is time to hang up his hat and hand the reins of the family business over to his son – who is less than enthusiastic about donning the famed red suit, throwing the future of the festive season into doubt. Festive comedy, starring Kelsey Grammer, Charles Durning and Elaine Hendrix. (2002)

FRIDAY

Shoot 'Em Up, Channel 5, 10.50pm

A gun-toting mysterious stranger delivers a baby, which he is forced to protect from a horde of heavily armed assassins. Enlisting the aid of a prostitute, he sets out to discover why the child has been marked for death. Action adventure, starring Clive Owen, Paul Giannatt and Monica Bellucci. (2007)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Jonathan Ross fronts the 25th annual British Comedy Awards

Jonathan Ross fronts the 25th annual British Comedy Awards, and as you may have guessed, there's a wealth of comedic talent up for the assorted plaudits.

Among them is Joe Wilkinson, who's in the running with Matt Berry, Nick Helm and Harry Peacock for Best Comedy Breakthrough Artist.

The hirsute funnyman has become a TV regular over the last couple of years, popping up in sublime sitcom *Him & Her*, and assorted panel games, including *Have I Got News For You* and *8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown* (both of which are up for Best Comedy Panel Programme).

But how did the Kent-born actor and comic make the leap from graphic designer to professional rib-ticker?

"I kind of enjoyed it (graphic design), but my heart was elsewhere," he explains. "I'd like to say that I orchestrated it, and it was all a big plan, but I wasn't really."

Joe had wanted to try his hand at comedy, but thought it was a club reserved for other people, until one fateful evening.

"My local pub was putting on open mic stand-up nights, so I went on and thought maybe I'll try but I won't tell anyone, and it was genuinely like, 'Right, I've done it, like a bungee jump sort of thing.'

After his routine, Joe was amazed when he was asked if he wanted to do it again in the coming weeks.

"I thought: 'Oh, I hadn't really thought about doing it again.' So I did think that a few months later, and then someone else booked me and it just sort of kept going."

"People kept booking me and I have no recollection of my first gig, I'm almost certain it wasn't brilliant," he laughs. "So it sort of just carried on from there. I'd love to say I had my five-point plan, I'm still sort of winging it if I'm honest."

Back to the Awards, and given the fact Will Ferrell was worshipped at last year's bash, there's no surprise to find last year's Anchorman 2 in the running for Best Comedy Film.

However, in case you're wondering why your favourite show or film from late September 2014 onwards isn't in the running this year, there's a good

reason: programmes or performances must have had their first transmission in the UK between September 24, 2013 and September 22, 2014 on terrestrial, cable, satellite or digital channels.

Special gongs include The Writers' Guild of Great Britain Award (WGB); Outstanding Achievement in Comedy; Lifetime Achievement in Comedy (the Python team may be in the running given their O2 gigs), and The King/Queen of Comedy.

Aisling Bea recently proved to be a superb guest on *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*, but will she manage to eclipse the likes of Bridget Christie, Isy Suttie (2013 winner) Nina Conti in the Best Female Television Comic stakes?

Viewers should expect the unexpected, the unperfumed and the unruly as some of the nation's favourite stars pick up their awards.

That remains to be seen, but one thing is for certain: as this year saw the passing of showbiz greats Robin Williams and Rik Mayall, there's bound to be a poignant moment as two of the best loved funnymen are remembered.



The British Comedy Awards 2014, Wednesday, Channel 4, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Bette Midler: One Night Only
ITV, 9pm

It's hard to believe that The Divine Miss M is a year shy of her 70th birthday – okay, so she's only just turned 69, we'll give her that – but in this time in the limeight, she's never done a UK television special before. Until now. It's been 42 years since Midler released her debut album, so she's bound to have plenty of stories for us tonight, as she chats about her life and career. The Grammy Award-winner will also be performing her various hits, including *Wind Beneath My Wings* and *From a Distance*, as well as songs from her new album, *It's the Girls*, including a cover of *The Ronettes' Be My Baby*. The whole thing is hosted by Joanna Lumley.

Steph and Dom Meet Nigel Farage
Channel 4, 10pm

Steph and Dom Parker, owners of plush B&B The Salutation, have caused quite the stir on telly favourite *Googlybox*. So what would happen if they were to come face to face with another of Britain's most opinionated personalities, UKIP's Nigel Farage? Wonder no more... This spin-off sees the Parkers joined by their local MP candidate, Farage, in a wine-fuelled evening, that's sure to leave him rather hot under the collar, thanks to all the questions they've got lined up for him.

TUESDAY

Black Mirror: White Christmas
ITV, 9pm

Charlie Brooker's dark drama series may seem like an odd choice to be given a Christmas special. However, there is a proud tradition of TV channels scaring us at Christmas; it's just that Brooker tends to do it via bleak visions of the future rather than ghost stories. This feature-length instalment brings us three yarns for the price of one, as in a remote, snowy outpost, charismatic Matt (Mad Men's Jon Hamm) and secretive Potter (Rafe Spall) swap tales about their lives on the outside world.

The Missing
BBC1, 9pm

Michael Palin's recent supernatural drama *Remember Me* may have been spooky, but some parents would probably argue that *The Missing* has been the most terrifying series of 2014. Poor Tony (James Nesbitt) only took his eyes off his five-year-old son for a split second in a crowded bar, but it was long enough for the youngster to disappear without a trace. Now, the investigation comes to an end, but will Tony, Emily and Julien finally get the answers they've been waiting for?

WEDNESDAY

Surprise Surprise
ITV, 8pm

Pop supergroup McBusted surprise one of their biggest fans with a performance on top of London's O2 arena, and former JLS member Marvin Humes makes a dream come true for an inspiring aid worker who came to the rescue of a Somerset village devastated by floods. Holly Willoughby presents.



Bette Midler: One Night Only, Monday, ITV, 9pm

to visit a 130-year-old tin church, one of the earliest takes on flat-pack construction in the country. His mate Will Hardie takes a tour of another chapel, although this one has been transformed into a luxury home. The guys then help the UK's only female ice carver create a winter wonderland ice bar in Liverpool before looking back at their favourite builds of the series over drinks in Joel Bird's Shed of the Year-winning construction.

FRIDAY

Text Santa
ITV, 8pm

The festive fundraising extravaganza returns, with the evening's presenting duos – Ant and Dec, Phillip Schofield and Christine Bleakley, and Paddy McGuinness and Alesha Dixon – joined by a host of famous faces to raise money for six deserving causes. Highlights include George Clooney making a surprise visit to Downton Abbey, the residents of Coronation Street appearing in a comedy sketch with a Text Santa twist, and Ant and Dec hosting a Yule Tucker Trial for an unsuspecting celebrity while serenaded by a choir of former jungle contestants. The Birds of a Feather stars also get involved, The Cube welcomes some unexpected visitors and there are appearances by the casts of Mr Selfridge and Emmerdale, plus plenty of live music throughout the show.

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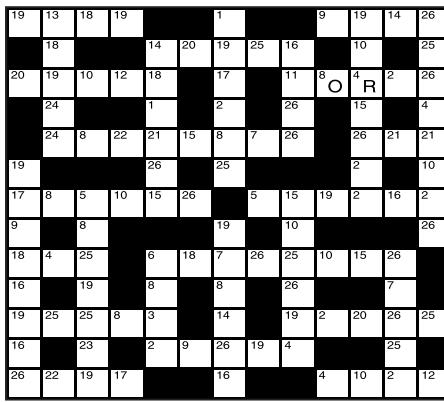
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	W	L	D	Z	S	X	Y	E	I	U	K	T	J
2	O	V	G	C	A	F	M	H	Q	B	N	R	P
3	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27

Quiz

- Which German Nazi was known as the Butcher of Lyon?
- By which name do we know the aquatic rodent Castor fiber?
- Which fictional hero was created by Baroness Orczy?
- Whose convalescent visit gave Bognor its Regis?
- Which fabric causes the lung disease byssinosis?
- Which popular cricket commentator died in January 1994?
- Who, in Greek mythology, was the father of Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto?
- Which author wrote *J'Accuse*, which concerned the Dreyfus affair?
- What relationship is Oliver Reed to director Carol Reed?
- Which city contains the residential district Beverly Hills?

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

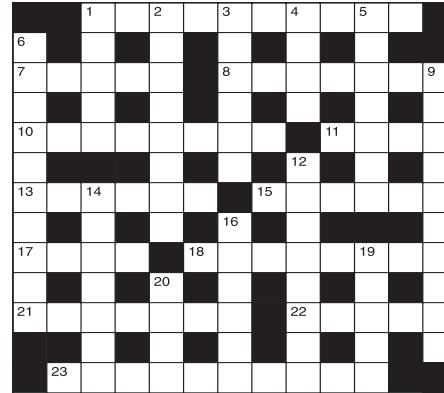
Cryptic Clues: Across

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

- The Sahara Express! (5,5)
- Learner gets horribly sore, because he's been beaten (5)
- French brass-hat sounds warlike (7)
- Marks of sovereignty in various respects (8)
- This is used for shooting slow-moving creature (4)
- Furtively take one's leave of French settlement (6)
- Robber gang is in front of it (6)
- 17 & 18 Ac.** A way of acquiring goods that sounds more expensive (4-8)
- See 17 Across
- One of the key players (7)
- Curses a shot that has gone astray (5)
- A storm seen to disturb a grampus (3-7)
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- A storm seen to disturb a grampus (3-7)

Down

- The social distinction of dramatic characters, we hear (5)
- Record the hour, but make no progress (4,4)
- Make flexible part of a gun carriage (6)
- A combination of artist and engineer is seldom found (4)
- Indulged in some inspiration? (7)
- Union policy, maybe, shut down the store (6,4)
- Lines in illuminated letters? (5,5)
- Beware when the guard has gone forth! (5,3)
- Concern about horse for slaughter (7)
- Name the man who's very narrowly elected! (6)
- See 20 Down
- He takes part on a set assignment (4,5)
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Quick Clues:

Across

- Recover (10)
- Mountain ash (5)
- Case (7)
- Preserve (6)
- Gown (4)
- Shoot (7)
- Voluntary (10)
- Done wrong (10)
- Unworn (8)
- Transfer (7)
- Structure (6)
- Lift (5)
- Throw out (5)
- Be idle (4)

Down

- Oarsman (5)
- Persuade (8)
- Impel (6)
- Run (6)
- Sole (4)
- Unfounded (8)
- Rescuer (7)
- Competent (10)
- Oarsman (5)
- Persuade (8)
- Impel (6)
- Run (6)
- Sole (4)
- Unfounded (8)
- Rescuer (7)
- Competent (10)

Sudoku

5	4	6						
7	2	4	9					
8	5	9	2	1				
7		6	2	1				
4		7	1					
	6	5						
3	6	9						
2	1	7	5	9				
	8	7						

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

1	3	2	9	4	6	8	7	5
7	9	6	1	8	5	3	4	2
8	4	5	2	7	3	1	9	6
3	7	9	8	5	2	4	6	1
1	4	7	6	9	2	3	8	5
2	6	8	3	1	4	9	5	7
6	5	3	4	2	8	7	1	9
9	2	1	5	3	7	6	8	4
4	8	7	6	9	1	5	2	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 6 Capital; 7 Share; 9 Act; 10 Cross-wind; 12 Charge-hands; 15 Cheval-glass; 17 Hair style; 19 For; 21 Beans; 22 Haricot. Down: 1 Cater; 2 Dig; 3 Fall; 4 Shoot; 5 Grenade; 6 As well as; 7 Give; 8 Leaf; 13 Relate; 14 Phrases; 16 Demon; 18 Leaf; 20 Bid. **QUICK** - Across: 6 Proceed; 7 Salad; 9 Fee; 10 Enlighten; 12 Persevering; 15 Indifferent; 17 Architect; 19 Try; 21 Steer; 22 Penalty. Down: 1 Order; 2 Act; 3 Keen; 4 Gathering; 5 Pageant; 8 Silver; 11 Delighted; 13 Safety; 14 Untruth; 16 Irate; 18 Crew; 20 Raw.

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

1322 gives an animal,
57796 gives a bird,
5345678 gives a fish.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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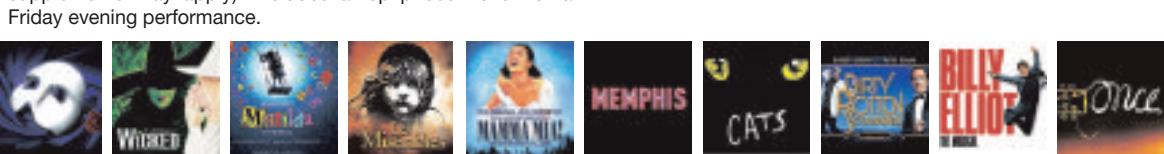
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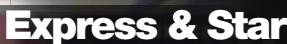
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French flair, c'est si chic

By Ian Donaldson

It looks good in a cheeky, properly modern way and its little engine lives under the boot floor, to intrigue the techies among us; both features giving the new Twingo a promising start in life.

It's got a lot to live up to. Version one arrived in 1992 and was an instant hit, with just the right amount of French chic to sit it at the top of many twenty-somethings automotive wish lists across mainland Europe.

The success of their baby may even have surprised its parent, for no right-hand drive was ever offered. Didn't stop some Brits buying, and loving, the left-handed model, whose comparative narrowness helped a helmsman sitting on the wrong side of the car.

Twingo II arrived in 2007, was available with UK-sized steering and sold tolerably well, despite losing its charm and looking like any number of other small family hatchbacks.

Now comes Twingo III and Renault has found its small car mojo again, with added practicality thanks to a bold decision to switch ends for the engine.

That move pays off in several ways, from allowing a stretched passenger cabin despite being shorter overall (and now with four passenger doors for the first time), to letting the front wheels turn much more sharply, for a turning circle that will make drivers chuckle the first time they make a U-turn on a narrow country road.

Other car makers stick to the usual front engine, front-wheel drive formula because

to change would cost a fortune. Renault can take the rearward route because it's sharing design costs with Mercedes-owned Smart, whose own version of the car is due soon, and looks like an update of the original, rear-engined cutie you see tucked into unlikely parking spots all over European cities.

Packing the engine away at the back doesn't badly compromise boot space, which can anyway be boosted by folding down the rear seats. The front passenger seat backrest flops forward too, allowing you to carry a Swedish flat-pack bookcase. So that's the trip to Ikea sorted, then.

There are more storage areas in the doors and under the rear seat, although a wobbly lidded bin in front of the gearlever was soon dispatched to the rear in the test car as it snagged the driver's left leg.

Every new Twingo has four doors. Renault says the popularity of two-door city cars is falling by the month and has styled its new baby with hidden releases at the rear, for the more coupe look of a two-door but with added practicality. Mums with babies to clip into the rear will thank Renault particularly.

Prices of the new Twingo range from £9,495 to £11,695, with all but the dearest using the same 1.0 litre engine and clearly aimed at a life in the city. The most expensive version actually has a slightly smaller (898cc) engine but with a power boosting turbo fitted for more convincing out-of-town performance.

The smaller engine is expected to take most sales and was a charming companion on the test route that took in hills and city centre and a decent stretch of dual carriageway too.



'Renault has found its small car mojo again, with added practicality thanks to a bold decision to switch ends for the engine.'

It makes the familiar throb of other three-cylinder power units and, allied to a crisp gearchange and light steering, soon had this driver smiling at the brio of this little charmer.

The more powerful version was noticeably quicker but felt coarser and the gearchange and steering were less user friendly.

It did, however, record 46mpg on the briskly driven test route compared to a disappointing 40mpg of the smaller engine

Twingo, perhaps because it needed less peddle to the metal coaxing.

Like many new small cars, there is a world of personalisation for buyers, who can add different coloured parts all around the interior and body flashes and bolder alloys on the outside. Smartphones can be attached to a dashboard cradle, adding satellite navigation and your music library at a fingertip stretch. The top Dynamique trim of the test car includes cruise control, alloy wheels and air conditioning.

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CHRISTINA, curly beauty, 27yrs, own home, very very adventurous seeks no strings fun and frolics. Can accommodate and will answer all calls. Tel No: 0905 002 19127

ANNE slim attractive N/S lady who is easy to get along with, looking for romantic interesting man for new adventures together, hopefully Itr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412911

JULIE loving, caring, honest, seeks real gent to share conversation and have a great time, friendship/relationship, who knows? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412777

ZOE, 25yrs, very naughty seeks man any age for broad minded no strings fun and games. Tel No: 0905 002 1933 Box No: 409719

FELICITY professional female, 32yrs, blonde, curly, fun. Travels a lot and wiltn chap for occasional fun on my travels. Text only Box: 4459438

SALLY stunning lady looking for dinner dates, partying and generally having a good time with generous man looking for his mojo No strings, go on call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412599

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SUE, 38yrs, passionate, broadminded and feisty seeks discreet fun with "mr wrong". Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box 413007

JAN slim curvy professional warm, affectionate, looking to fill full time vacancy with similar male who loves cuddles/kisses and bikes for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412167

FUN loving lady, likes most things in life, would like to meet fun loving man for possible romance. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4454362

EUROPEAN beauty romantic, caring, attentive, looking for loving male to enjoy warm loving relationship, with call me to find out more. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413013

MAUREEN, discreet sensual lady, 42yrs seeks daytime fun at her home. ACA. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 405297

KAREN 34 blue/green eyed size 12 attractive brunette who loves pubs, cosy nights in, kids, seeking special need guy/dad for poss Itr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413005

ROSA 27 very senorita seeking older, handsome prince charming to whisk me off my feet, enjoy fun times, improve my English and fall in love with. Age/race unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412927

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. Tel No: 0905 002 1956 Box 366019

RITA attractive blonde with a very kind heart seeks special man to share my life with. Please get in touch if like me you are fed up with always being the single friend. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412987

SUSIE discreet married lady, young 36yrs seeks uncomplicated times with man any age or area, all texts answered. Text only Box: 4459437

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KIM 25 feminine, pretty, big blue eyes, GSOH, varied interests. Likes romantic beach walks, cosy nights in, seeking honest loving man for Itr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411777

CAROL young 47, caring, loyal, likes music, concerts, cinema, theatre, seeks male with similar interests for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411919

PROFESSIONAL black lady, likes cooking, music, countryside, seeking friendhip. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411763

VICKY 37 professional, mum to one, sensual and very attractive, looking for a real man, tall, fit, sincere and passionate to enjoy each other's company. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411985

LUCY beautiful bubbly blonde 32yrs, seeking naughty boy to enjoy the fun side of life, with age, status and looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411691

PAULINE attractive divorced female with no ties, employed with my own home, likes nights in/out, lots of tlc to give to the right person, call me for a chat, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411039

JEN attractive sensual petite blonde with OHAC seeks confident professional male to enjoy and share good times, if that's you pls get in touch. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410949

KATHERINE 35y old outgoing single female looking to enjoy dates with similar male also looking for fun times in or out. Age, looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410565

PAULINE attractive divorced female with no ties, employed with my own home, likes nights in/out, lots of tlc to give to the right person, call me for a chat, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410955

EMMIE 50, attractive blonde, 5ft 5ins, GSOH, likes country walks, music, reading, seeks genuine, friendly, professional male with GSOH for friendhip, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412128

RETIRRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, seeks tall, funny, kind chap. Shropshire. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459

RITA naughty 40's petite pretty female looking for that special man in my life, any age, to get to know and see what happens, you only live once remember! Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410949

LYNNE young looking attractive Indian female with GSOH and down to earth attitude, looking for likeminded male for date nights, hopefully more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412129

EMMIE 50, attractive blonde, 5ft 5ins, GSOH, likes country walks, music, reading, seeks genuine, friendly, professional male with GSOH for friendhip, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412128

TINA sexy black female looking for healthy distractions with fun adult companion, interested? You won't be disappointed, give me a call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411519

SUSAN 64, lively, seeking male for friendship, maybe more. 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413129

ATTRACTIVE slim blonde, 47, N/S, seeks tall, slim male for a cut above the average relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412725

KAREN pretty blonde, short in stature, big personality, keeps fit, loves dogs, seeking honest, caring male who can make me laugh. Nothing too serious just fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412377

JEAN petite female who enjoys golf, days out, cosy evenings in, holidays, WLTM older male in his 60's with a good personality and big heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413055

TRINA really fun loving slim pretty female 38 looking for nice guy to go out with, get to know and hopefully enjoy a relationship with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411517

GWENDOLINE honest, trustworthy, seeks caring gent who enjoys cinema, theatre, holidays and nights out for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412293

SARAH bored blonde looking for single guys for fun, chats and meets, looking forward to hearing from you, don't be shy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412055

EMMA pretty young 31y old attractive single blonde, loves walking, talking, music, seeks honest romantic 30yrs. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412037

ANNABELL 29 slim sophisticated well travelled interesting sensual fit brunnet with lots to offer seeks older male to appreciate and treat me well. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412177

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CAROL 38 attractive romantic not looking for fair tales just happy endings, seeking lovely male to put the sparkle back into my life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410721

CLARE voluptuous tall feminine attractive lady who loves good company, fine wine/food, travel, WLTM tall professional for romance dates and hopeful Itr. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410627

ARE you dark or bald, with hairy chest, well built, educated, verbal, articulate dom or sub, broadminded and ready to be put in your place? Curious to find out more? Call me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410637

29YR old black beautiful busty tall loving very sensual lady, likes football, making friends, seeking genuine white male for enjoyable loving relationship. Pls no time wasters. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410577

LIZ 5ft 7ins, attractive, outgoing, likes walks, dogs, cooking, seeks male for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410577

KAREN 32 a hardworking petite blonde, enjoys nights out, music, etc, WLTM for more than just friendhip with similar chilled, kind, easy going guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410461

BLAKE guy 68, feels 45, looks 40, seeks female 58-71, GSOH, genuine, caring for fun times and LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413375

LONELY male, disabled, would like to meet male or female for company. Ladies, animals, visiting historical places, karaoke. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 412784

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STEPHEN 58, good looking, likes art, travel, seeking female, 50 plus for companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412633

MALCOLM 61, smoker, great personality, likes coach holidays, drives, pubs, meals out, nights out, 60's music, seeks female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412523

TONY 52, dark hair, white male, 6ft, confident, GSOH, seeks black female. Genuine ad. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412481

TALL 42y old sincere male, caring, honest, loving, seeking female, 30-40 for fun, friendship and good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412483

ALAN tall widower, 76, looking for female of similar age who enjoys meals out, holidays and walks. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412261

INTELLIGENT sincere Shropshire male, slim, young 60's, playfully assertive, seeking complimentary, responsive, feminine lady, 50-60's who enjoys music, books, the arts and countryside. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411285

EASY going male 45, likes sports, seeks female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411541

SFT 6ins male, dark hair/eyes, glasses, likes meals out, seeks female for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412227

ATTRACTION male, seeks 100% adult fun with woman, any age/looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412126

TALL 42y old, 6ft 6ins, likes cinema, nights in/out, sports, socialising. GSOH seeking similar female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412227

IAN 65, romantic, likes to wine/dine, days out, seeking younger female for relationship. Discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412267

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 410955

NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt. Let me call you. Any age, looks good. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101

SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263

MID naughty pretty female looking for thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with nice, Any age, pls contact me. I'm very lonely. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505

TALL attractive Shrewsbury male, 54, seeks attractive female for fun and excitement in the daytime. Discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411283

TIGER Woods lookalike, seeking pretty BTR for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411801

TALL Indian gent, 53, seeks sensual lady for friendship plus, interesting chap, discreet days in and nights out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413135

GENT widower, tall, slim, looks younger, GSOH, likes music, good food, country pursuits, seeks female, 50-60+ for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413173

TONY young looking 50's male, 5ft 8ins, many interests, easy going, seeks slim rock chick or similar for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413275

6FT 1ins slim, dark hair, likes walking, minimise seeking friend build female, 60-80 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413193

JEFF young 52, N/S, tall, fit, energetic, seeking new female. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413053

JOHN 5ft 10ins, slim, seeking female for friendhip, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413183

FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408531

TAYLOR attractive very busty curly black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311

BETHANY 25y old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408233

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising, WLTM for adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259

WENDY 50, blue eyes, 5ft 7ins, likes music, meals out, seeks white male, 45-55 with similar interests and GSOH for friendhip, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413107

RETIRED male, seeking no strings adult fun and frolics, discretion assured, age/status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412727

TONY young looking 50, 5ft 8ins, slim, seeks rock chick, trendy for dates and LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413067

MALE 40's, discreet, seeks black male, under 30 for fun and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412415

KEVIN 53, looking for a friend/partner and a lover. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412869

NORTH Shropshire male, 67, N/S, solvent, GSOH, likes walks, travel, music, holidays, countryside, seeks N/S lady for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412463

MAURICE gentleman, 59, gentle, kind, caring, loving, generous, seeks lady with GSOH and similar personality, slim-medium build. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412859

MALE seeking female companion for outings, friend ship and holidays. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412705

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MALE 67, seeking lady 30-50 for friendship/companionship and occasional days/night out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411293

INTELLIGENT sincere Shropshire male, slim, young 60's, playfully assertive, seeking complimentary, responsive, feminine lady, 50-60's who enjoys music, books, the arts and countryside. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411285

EASY going male 45, likes sports, seeks female for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411541

SFT 6ins male, dark hair/eyes, glasses, likes meals out, seeks female for friendhip, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 412227

ATTRACTION male, seeks 100% adult fun with woman, any age/looks or status. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411261

MARK 74, fit, N/S, car driver, young male, seeks slim lady for friendhip, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411673

<p

Old Hales Thirds hand out a rout

OHHC 3rds 11 Stone 1

WITH both the Men and Ladies' 1st XI games falling foul of the weather, it left the Men's 3rd XI as the only remaining home fixture for Old Halesonians HC.

Old Hales opened the scoring when Adam Hill turned in the D and fired through the Stone keeper.

Hales doubled their lead when Tom Hickman intercepted a pass from the Stone defence and drove into the circle before squaring the ball for Adam Hill to tap in at the back post.

Jack Wolsencroft made it 3-0 before Steve Butler scored from a penalty corner.

Butler got his second and it soon became 6-0 when Alex Evans found the net.

In the second half Old Hales chased more goals. Adam Hill completed his hat-trick Wolsencroft got his second.

Captain Nic Penn scored and Steve Butler also got a hat-trick to make before Alex Evans completed the rout with his second. Stone got a consolation late on.

Other Results: Worcester 3-2 OHHC 2nds, goalscorers Tom Bolton, Joe Thorne. Worcester 1-1 OHHC 5ths, goalscorers: Neil Hurst

Wolves get Fulham in Cup draw

WOLVES have been handed a trip to Craven Cottage in the third round of the FA Cup with Albion given a plum tie with non-league side Gateshead.

Kenny Jackett's men have happy memories of playing Fulham this season, after Bakary Sako bagged the winner as Wolves claimed the Championship points with a 1-0 victory.

Under-pressure Baggies boss Alan Irvine will welcome a run in the famous old competition and his side have been given a huge chance of making it through to round four after being paired with the north-east outfit. Villa are at home against Blackpool.

Games will be played between January 3-6.

Tividale squander two goal lead

M Drayton 2 Tividale 2

TIVIDALE ended a run of four straight league Evo-Stik Division One South defeats but squandered a two-goal lead at Market Drayton.

Despite plenty of Tividale possession and looking threatening, the first chance on 10 minutes fell to Market Drayton as Aiden Haughton fired wide and six minutes later it was Michael O'Reilly's turn to shoot wide.

Tividale's first clear chance came when a Deqwon Ebanks effort was saved by Drayton keeper Daniel Read. Tividale went ago-

Football

nisingly close on 30 minutes when a Ebanks header from a Zac Foster cross came back off the crossbar.

Then Drayton's early substitute Joe Donaldson struck the bar with the goal at his mercy. Tividale had another great chance to take the lead when a Chris Fields shot was deflected over the line by Karl Edwards but it was ruled offside.

The visitors opened the scoring on 37 minutes when Edwards pounced on a

Danny Ashton cross into the near post and gave Read no chance. On the stroke of half-time they should have extended their lead when David Bellis ran straight through the Drayton back line only to have his shot brilliantly blocked by Read. The ball fell nicely to Ashton with an open goal in front of him and he took a touch but then shot wide of the post.

Drayton had the second half's first effort on goal when a Cohen Bramall free-kick was parried by Price but William Whieldon failed to control the rebound and he blazed over. On 57 minutes a Foster free-kick was

met by the head of Edwards but again Read saved well. Tividale doubled their lead on the hour when Ebanks got his reward for his hard work up front when he latched onto a poor Drayton clearance and beat Read with his shot.

Six minutes later Drayton halved the deficit when a Tividale error let in Jordan Johnson and he made no mistake when left one on one with Price.

Tividale were struggling to keep the ball out of their own half and on 76 minutes came the inevitable. Tividale failed to clear and James Askey headed home.

Christmas arrives early for Old Hales

Old Halesonians 68 Dudley Kingswinford 0
THE Christmas festivities began on Presidents Day at Wassell Grove in National League 3.

The home side took the field in no doubt as to what was expected. Old Hales kicked off up the slope in what were perfect conditions for rugby. From the outset Hales stamped their mark on the game, forwards and backs immediately went hunting for the ball.

Almost immediately they gained a line out just on half way which was won by the second row's Tom King.

He presented a clean ball to scrum half Nathan Jones who started a series of 15 phases of up front driving by the forwards led by Tom Jordan, Loz Breese, Mark Evans and Jay Martin.

Winger Luke Smith out ran the defence for his first try, converted by Chris Hooper.

It was apparent that Smith was on a roll and on eight minutes he left the DK defenders behind for his second try and another conversion by Hooper.

Smith then went on to score his hat trick.

Andy Robinson drove to the line for Hales with players hanging off him to score his first try of the season, and a bonus point score, converted by Hooper.

Five minutes later Hooper dummied his way through the DK defence to score under the posts and convert.

The second half started pretty much the same as the first ended. Tom Dempsey came on at prop for Louis Padian, Nigel Burrows on for Loz Breese.



DK's Prop Rich Kelley powers forward in game where Old Halesonians dominated to shut out their opponents

Greaves coming back to Heathens

CRADLEY fans' favourite Nathan Greaves has agreed a deal which will see him back at the club for a third successive season in 2015.

Greaves was unveiled as the club's second signing for their move to Perry Barr in front of a packed audience at the Heathens Children's Club Christmas Party at Cradley Heath Liberal Club.

And his appearance in front of the youngsters went down well after he made the journey from his South Yorkshire base to meet fans.

Greaves is already preparing for the 2015 campaign and says he is "over the moon" to be back with the Heathens for a shot at a hat-trick of league titles.

He said: "I would never really want to leave Cradley - who would? I want a third straight league title!"

"They're a massive club with great fans and they're definitely the best team in the National League so I'm delighted."

"Last season I know I improved my average and I know I've come on a heck of a lot since first signing for the club, but I want to make sure that I improve even further in 2015. I want to push myself as much as I can and 2015 is going to be a big year for me."

Morgan is facing an FA charge

WOLVES chairman Steve Morgan is facing an FA fine if he is found guilty of insulting referee Mike Jones.

The Molineux chief remonstrated with Jones following a series of controversial decisions in the 2-1 defeat to Bournemouth on Saturday.

Football's governing body alleges 'his language and/or behaviour after the end of the fixture was abusive and/or insulting and/or improper'.

Jones had to be escorted off the pitch at the end of the game with a furious Morgan venting his frustration at the official. Wolves are - indirectly - involved in another FA charge with Georg Margreiter in the middle of a potential error.

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Lead is lost

Tivs squander two goals to settle for draw

Page 35

DK downed

Old Hales hand out a real thrashing

Page 35



email: Chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

Going up looking likely for Harriers

BIRMINGHAM and District Cross Country League

Promotion to Division 2 is a distinct possibility for West Bromwich Harriers. With two races to go WBH have a lead of 137 points from their nearest rivals Massey Ferguson, after increasing their lead by a further 83 points.

The first three clubs now stand at WBH 188 points, MF 325 and Black Pear Joggers 333 points.

The club had its first ever league winner in James Jefferson in a time of 33.42, from second-placed Andrew Blakunus of Sphinx AC by 24 seconds, a gap of some 150 metres, over the 10k course at Walsall Airport, hosted by Aldridge Running Club.

James was very ably supported by Richard Powell sixth in 35.44, Girmal Dehl seventh in 36.19, Gary Whitehouse 12th in 37.03, new boy, Adam Hancock 20th in 37.35, with Lee Harris making up the team 36th in 38.33.

Others who finished were, Matt Whitehouse 37th, Dave Jones 82nd, Paul Stevens 111th, Andrew Moseley 120th, Andy White 141st, Clark Woodhall 142nd, Dave Bratby 150th, and Jim Jones 167th.

The next race is at Droitwich in January 2015.

Joel strikes like lightning

Wellington Amateurs 0
Dudley Town 5

DUDLEY Town ran riot away at Wellington Amateurs with Joel Ambal scoring the Robins' fastest ever league goal in eight seconds.

They racked up the away win to leapfrog their hosts into 15th place in the West Midlands Premier Division.

Ambal opened the scoring in dramatic fashion after Wellington defender Nathan Taylor's intended back pass to keeper Scot Hoof fell short.

The striker doubled Town's lead on 27 minutes with Lee Smith adding a third 10 minutes later.

A superb close range volley from Rhys Morgan on 63 minutes ended any hopes the Shropshire side had of a comeback.

Andy Arnold celebrated the Robins' fifth nine minutes later.

Jordanne joins sporting best at awards

HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley will join a host of other international stars at BBC Sports Personality of the Year in Glasgow on Sunday.

The British No.1 has won a quartet of awards in the last week in the wake of her Grand Slam-winning exploits this season partnering Japan's Yui Kamiji.

Whiley was named Female Player of the Year, voted Players' Player of the Year and also received the Jim Cochran Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to her sport in Great Britain at the British Wheelchair Tennis Awards in Gloucester,

Tennis

which were presented alongside this year's National Championships.

After ending her season with a career-best Masters performance, Whiley and Kamiji stayed in London for the Lawn Tennis Writers Association Awards at Wimbledon, where Whiley was honoured with a special presentation after becoming the first British tennis player in history to win a calendar year Grand Slam. The same day her dad Keith collected her Female Player

of the Year award in Gloucester and, after sitting out this year's National Championships following her phenomenally busy season, Whiley visited Sunday's final day of the event to receive the Jim Cochran Award.

"My dad has always inspired me, he's a former Paralympic medalist, too, and the reason I started playing wheelchair tennis, so it was perfect that he could collect the Female Player of the Year award, with my boyfriend collecting the Players' Player award," said Whiley.

Dad Keith went on to finish runner-up in the men's consolation singles at the Na-

tional Championships after being drawn to meet British No. 1, world No. 3 and eventual champion Gordon Reid in the first round.

"Each awards ceremony I get invited to after what's happened to me and Yui this year, I have to keep pinching myself."

"But I want to do it all again in 2015 and I want to win my first Grand Slam singles title, starting with the Australia Open at the end of next month."

That's the goal and I couldn't do any of it without the support of family, friends, and coaches.

Varnish goes out in semi

JESS VARNISH suffered disappointment with a semi-final exit in the women's keirin at the Track World Cup in London.

Halesowen Cycling Club's Varnish was second to Simonas Kruepeckaitė of Lithuania in her heat, falling into the repêchage.

Just one rider progressed at the second attempt and Varnish took to the front on the final lap and crossed the line first. World champion Kristina Vogel won the Briton's semi-final ahead of Tianshi Zhong of China and Russia's Ekaterina Gnidenko, with Varnish's fourth-placed finish not enough to progress. Olympic champion Laura Trott fared better, however, as she won Great Britain's fourth gold with victory in the women's omnium.

Trott, who won gold in track cycling's equivalent of the heptathlon at London 2012, claimed her second gold of the three-day event at the Lee Valley VeloPark, formerly the Olympic Velodrome.

She was a key figure in the win in the women's team pursuit, while Britain also won the corresponding men's event.

Dudley stung in second half

Bustleholme 2
Team Dudley 1

BUSTLEHOLME won this West Midlands Division One match up.

Reece Bancroft tapped in Dudley's opener.

But in the second half the Bs equalised with a far-post tap-in and a 74th-minute headed goal claimed the points.

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ANOTHER ROAD WIN FOR YELTZ

Grantham 0 Halesowen 2

THE Yeltz claimed yet another win on the road, as two first half goals from Halesowen put the game out of reach for Grantham.

The Yeltz made two changes to the side that overcame Gresley last Saturday, as Ben Haseley and Tom Tonks returned to the side, taking the place of Robert Thompson-Brown and Elliot Turner.

Halesowen dominated the first half, and they had their opening chance came on 14 minutes.

Haseley played the ball through to lyseden Christie who skipped past two Grantham players before his shot crashed off the underside of the bar and came back out into play.

Denied

Grantham had their chances as well, as Stefan Bilyk managed to find space a couple of yards out and smash the ball towards goal, but he was denied brilliantly by Matt Sergeant.

The Yeltz kept up the pressure on the home side and eventually found the crack in the home side's defence with less than half hour of the game gone.

Grantham could only hold out for so long, and on 27 minutes the game turned with Yeltz taking control of the game away from Grantham.

Tonks threw a long ball into the box, and Haseley was there to jump up and nod the ball into the net to give the Yeltz a lead which they refused to relinquish

Knockout blow as bouts are called off



No let-up - Ricky Summers at Priory Park Boxing Club, Dudley

TIPTON'S Ricky Summers and Dudley's Ryan Aston were both dealt a knockout blow on Wednesday night because they were supposed to box in the Holte Suite at Aston Villa, but the show was cancelled, writes Craig Birch.

The Yeltz have moved up to 14th place, while Grantham have only claimed one win in their last seven games.

Summers had a 'keep busy' light heavyweight outing against long-standing target Mitch Mitchell planned, while Aston was supposed to take on Simone Lucas at light

middle. But they won't be able to over-indulge in festive treats earlier than expected, though, as only new Midlands light welterweight champion Luke Paddock has been given a holiday from the gym.

Sparring is out but has been replaced by strength training three times a week for the pro section of Priory Park Boxing Club, which will last right up until their next ring dates. They will likely feature on pro-

motor Paul 'PJ' Rowson's next Black Country bill around February.

Highly-rated welterweight Tommy Ghent, from Coseley, is back in the gym, too, and still in possession of a flawless pro record of five wins with three stoppages.

Trainer Paul Gough: "Ricky and Ryan had trained hard for their fights and sold all of their ticket allocation, so it was a bit of a kick in the teeth."

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